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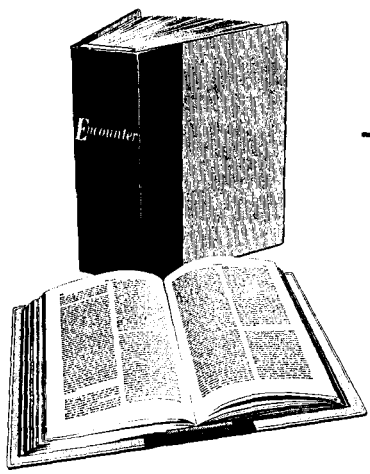

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R. K. Narayan

Annamalai

I KNEW VERY WELL that Annamalai could not write and that someone else must have written that postcard for him. Of its twenty lines, the first ten consisted of the usual ceremonial address such as calling me a benefactor of humanity on whose lotus feet was being placed an epistle for favour of perusal and consideration. When the word "favour" occurred, I expected and found a demand for money embedded in a lot of honorifics. I should willingly have sent a small pension for Annamalai, but I had no means of verifying if he was alive. How could I be certain that the writer was not Amavasai that shark who might be attempting to gather any loose cash in the name of a dead brother by writing from that strange bourne, which seemed to have no fixed name? Annamalai himself used to name his village in three different ways, whenever he wanted me to address a postcard for him. He uttered something that sounded like *Marakonam*. But if I probed further, he called it *Peramanallur*, and he also mentioned NUMTHOD POST, all of which I wrote one under another and the postcard did eventually reach its destination. Annamalai was always particular that the address on the card should be in English, although the message was written in Tamil for him by a friend in the Bamboo Bazaar beyond the railway line, who hailed from the same district and was also called Annamalai. Everyone in that village seemed to bear the same name.

In order to have the address written, Annamalai would come up the staircase on what he supposed to be soft, stealthy steps, and stand behind my chair while I was bent over my desk. But I could sense his approach the moment he stepped indoors; his tread was heavy and scratchy and his joints creaked as he shuffled along uneasily up the staircase. None of this awkwardness was noticeable when he worked in the open. He achieved an effortless camouflage in a background of mud and greenery. He became nearly invisible when he stood ankle-deep in slush at the bed of a banana seedling, dressed in a pair of shorts, his bare back roasted to an ebonite shade by the sun, with a red bandana knotted over his ear pirate fashion. I often watched him from my study window while he kept digging up the garden at one corner or another. Occasionally he would pause with his gaze fixed on the handle of the pick-axe. When I noticed him petrified thus, I knew that he must be brooding over affairs at home in his village. Presently I could expect his footfalls on the stairs. He would stand behind my chair suppressing even his breath, lest it should disturb me, but he could not help the little sighs and rumbles emanating from his throat when he attempted to remain quiet. After a moment's waiting, he would look through the windows at the gate and suddenly let out a drover's cry, "*Hai, Hai*" at a shattering pitch and go on to explain, "Again those cows! They will smash our gate some day and get at our lawns and flowers so laboriously tended by this old fellow. Strangers passing our gate cannot help crying, 'See those red flowers how well they have come up! All that the old fellow's work!

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How well he looks after the plants in spite of his age!'" and then present the postcard to be addressed.

ANNAMALAI FANCIED HIMSELF an expert horticulturist although our lawn displayed more weeds such as oxalis than grass. When I protested against oxalis, he would say, "Why not? That plant is also green, why hate it?" He classified plants in two simple categories. If I asked, "What plant is this?" Annamalai would declare after scrutiny, "It's a sort of *Poon Chedi* (Flowering Plant)," and add what I was myself able to observe, "Yellow flowers." Or he would say in a voice packed with contempt, "It's a sort of *Poondu* (a weed)," and suddenly seize it and tug it off its roots cursing it loudly.

"What has that poor thing done to you?" I would ask. He would mumble, "It's an evil herb, must not be allowed to flourish in human habitations."

"What kind of evil?" I would persist and he would add, his classification once again being extremely simple, "Children generally get stomach ache when they inhale the poisonous air of that plant."

"But you know very well there are no children here." He would ignore my remark and resume his digging. He believed in perpetual digging, digging for its own sake. When he did not dig, he attempted to improve the border of the lawn with the edge of his spade, and created a serpentine line along the little drive from the gate. When he dug a rectangular trench, it looked hexagonal, when he attempted a round patch, it assumed egg-shape; it was a feat, as far as I could see, to achieve asymmetry so unfailingly. If I criticised his pattern, he would retreat a few paces to study the exotic designs produced by his spade, and declare finally, "It is all right, that's the fashion today, so said the *Mali* in the park who gets a hundred rupees a month."

I LET HIM have his way in everything, for the total effect he produced would invariably be startling. It suited my needs, since I had an aversion to a self-conscious, preplanned garden. Our plants grew anyhow, anywhere and my compound became a minor wilderness. The only attention Annamalai gave the plants was, as far as I could see, an ungrudging supply of water out of a hundred-foot hose-pipe, which he turned on every plant till it was doused. He created an uninhibited subtropical vegetation. Rose plants grew up leafy, menacing entanglements, clawing at passers-by. Cannae grew to monstrous heights, jasmine into wild undergrowth with blooms maliciously out of reach; and dahlias flourished spontaneously, generation after generation shooting up, blooming, wilting, and appearing again of their own accord on the same bed. Annamalai took the credit unreservedly for all Nature's activity. Sometimes I protested when hedge plants developed into ramparts shutting off all view and he would say, "Yes, yes, I must do something about it," and go on to explain that he was only waiting for the sun (or the rain, whichever was not there), and one day arming himself with shears and scythe, clip and hack blindly whatever was within his reach, achieving thereby strange, unearthly topiary.

At the end of the day, he laid away his gardening outfit, splashed water over his face, and pulled off his forbidding red bandana in order to use it as a towel, washed and scrubbed his feet on a slab of granite till the heels became blood-red.

This was his off-hour, when he would visit the "Gate Shop," at the level-crossing down hill, run by the gate-keeper's uncle (everyone knew that the gate-keeper owned it but could not say so being a railway servant). Thither Annamalai would go for relaxation, sit on a log of wood, buy betel leaves and a length of tobacco leaf and chew them with contentment. He also imbibed a lot of current news, read to him from a local news-sheet (it was there that he heard of Kennedy's death, of border troubles, of new taxes, crimes and accidents.) When he was returning home, I could spot him, half a mile away, from my window, as his red

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bandana suddenly came into view over the crest of a slope.

HE WOULD COME into my study bearing a postcard in hand and announce "A letter for you. The postman gave it." Actually it would be a letter for him, which he'd never know until told, when he would suddenly become tense, and take a step nearer in order to absorb all the details. "What does he say?" he would ask irritably. His only correspondent was his brother Amavasai, and he hated to hear from him. Torn between curiosity and revulsion he would wait for me to finish reading the postcard. "What does that fellow have to say to me?" he would ask in a tone of disgust and add, "As if I could not survive without such a brother!" I'd read aloud the postcard which always began formally with a ceremonial flourish:

> To my Godly, God-like older brother and protector, this poor and insignificant brother Amavasai submits as follows. At this moment we are all flourishing and we also pray for our divine elder brother's welfare in one breath.

All this preamble would occupy half the space on the back of the card to be abruptly followed by mundane matters.

> The boundary stone on the North side of our land was tampered with last night. We know who did it.

Pushing the tobacco (on his tongue) out of the way in order to speak without impediment, Annamalai would demand, "If you really know who, why don't you crack his skull? Are you bereft of all sense? Tell me that first," and glare angrily at the postcard in my hand. I'd read the following line by way of an explanation,

> But they don't care.

"They don't? Why not?" The next few lines would agitate him most, but I had to read them out.

> Unless you come and deal with them personally, they will never be afraid. If you keep far away, nothing will improve. You are away and do not care for your kith and kin and are indifferent to our welfare or suffering. You did not care to attend even my daughter's naming ceremony. This is not how the head of a family should behave.

The rest of the letter generally turned out to be a regular charge-sheet, but concluded ceremonially, mentioning again lotus feet and divinity. If I said, in order to divert his mind, "Your brother writes well," he would suddenly grin, very pleased at the compliment, exposing his betel-juice-stained red teeth and remark, "He to write! Oh, oh, he is a lout. That letter is written by our school-master. We generally tell him our thoughts and he will write. A gifted man." He would prepare to go downstairs remarking, "Those fellows in my village are illiterates and louts. Do you think my brother could talk to a telepoon?"

One of his urban triumphs was that he could handle the telephone. In distinguishing the mouth-piece from the ear-piece, he displayed the pride of an astronaut strolling in space. He felt an intimacy with the instrument and whenever it rang, he'd run up to announce, "Telepoon, *Sami*," even if I happened to be near it. When I came home at night he'd always run forward to declare while opening the gate, "There was a telepoon—someone asked if master was in...."

"Who was it?"

"Who? How should I know. Did I see his face?"

"Didn't you ask his name?"

"No, what should I do with his name?"

One morning he waited at my bedroom door to tell me, "At five o'clock, there was a telepoon. Master was sleeping, and so I asked who are you? He said 'trunk, trunk', and I told him go away, don't trouble us. No trunk or baggage here. Master is sleeping." To this day I have no idea where the trunk call was from. When I tried to explain to him what a "Trunk Call" was he kept saying, "When master is sleeping, that fellow asks for a trunk! Why should we care?" I gave up.

THE ONLY WAY to exist in harmony with Annamalai was to take him as he was; to improve or enlighten him would only exhaust the reformer and disrupt nature's design. There is greater peace in accepting certain things in life as they come. That's how I started with him. (I had had no idea what-

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ever who he was or where he came from.) At the time I was planning to build my house in New Extension, he was brought along by the building contractor as his watchman. With bamboos and a few pieces of coconut thatch Annamalai quickly built a hut for himself, and sat in it night and day like a mastiff in its kennel, and guarded the building materials heaped around. God knows one needed a mastiff to guard one's property at that lonely spot in those days. Only a rough track led to my site, my closest neighbour being a mile away at the bend of the road, the land rolled up and down ended far off into a range of hillocks northward with a railway line winding through the cuttings; it was picturesque but an unsafe place. Long after my house had been built and occupied, I used to notice from my bedroom window burglars crouching in a storm-water ditch beyond my house examing their booty by a torch light. Annamalai's presence in the hut kept off intruders; his stentorian challenges and obscenities addressed to the wind, accompanied with the tapping on the ground of a metal rod, created an extraordinary atmosphere of intimidation.

When there was a delay in the completion of the house and tension developed between me and the building contractor, I found Annamalai taking my side in the quarrel. He gave me an account from time to time of the several misdeeds, subterfuges, misappropriations, and diversion of labour and materials, perpetrated by the contractor which caused the delay. When he left, the contractor, in chagrin, abandoned his watchman but Annamalai continued, with the difference that a basement room was provided for him in place of the thatched hut. Annamalai's name became a byword for watchfulness. No one touched a flower or a leaf in my garden, as he stalked around the compound all day. In course of time when the neighbourhood developed it was not necessary to establish such an aggressive guard, but Annamalai did not recognise the coming of the Industrial Estate, or the hundred houses that sprang up around, blotting out the view of the railway line and the northern hill range; he continued to menace the people passing down our street if they dallied even so slightly at my gate. Sometimes he softened when someone asked for flowers for worship. If he saw me noticing the transaction, he would shout in rage, "Go away. What do you think you are? Do flowers come up by themselves? Here is the old fellow giving his life to tending them, and you think . . ." and charge threateningly towards the would-be worshipper, but if I remained indoors and watched through the window I could see him give a handful of flowers to the person at the gate, muting his steps and tone and glancing over his shoulder to make sure that I was not watching.

Annamalai was supposed to earn money selling my flowers, according to the lady next door, who had constituted herself his implacable enemy. According to Annamalai, she demanded whenever I was away on tour, the banana leaves grown in my garden, for her guests to dine on, and his steady refusal had angered her. Whenever I passed their compound wall, she would whisper, "You are trusting that fellow too much, he is always talking to people at the gate and always carrying on some transaction. . . ." A crisis of the first order developed when she charged him with the theft of her fowls once. She reared poultry, which often invaded my compound through a gap in the fence and all afternoon Annamalai would be chasing them out with stones and war cries. When I was away for months on end, according to the lady, every other day she missed a bird while counting them at night. She explained how Annamalai dazed the fowl by throwing a wet towel over its head, and carried it off to the shop at the level-crossing, where his accomplices sold or cooked it. Once feathers were found scattered around Annamalai's habitat, when it was raided by a watchman of the Municipal Sewage Farm who wore a khaki coat and pretended to be a policeman. Annamalai was duly frightened and upset.

One afternoon, returning home from a tour, I found Annamalai standing on a foot-high block of stone, in order to be heard

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better next door, and haranguing, "You set the police on me, did you, because you have lost a fowl? So what? What have I to do with it? If it strays into my compound, I'll twist its neck, no doubt, but don't imagine that I will thieve like a cheap rascal. Why go about fowl-thieving? I care two straws for your police. They come to us for *baksheesh* in our village; foolish people will not know that. I am a respectable farmer with an acre of land in the village. I grow rice. Amavasai looks after it and writes to me. I receive letters by post. If I am a fowl-thief, what are those that call me so? Anyway, what do you think you are? Whom do you dare to talk to?"

In this strain he spoke for about half-an-hour addressing the air and the sky, but the direction of his remarks could not be mistaken. Every day, at the same hour he delivered his harangue, soon after he had eaten his mid-day food, chewed tobacco, and tied the red bandana securely over his ears. Sometimes, he added much biographical detail in his speech. Although it was chiefly meant for the lady next door, I gathered a great deal of fresh information about his life, from his high-pitched monologue, how he had left his village home when he was eleven years old, crossed the seas and worked in the tea plantations of Ceylon; and had returned home with malaria. When he recovered from malaria, his father swiftly bound him in a marriage hoping to tie him down to the village; but after the birth of a daughter he ran away again, this time to the rubber plantations in Malaya, where he worked until the time of the Japanese invasion.

I told him: "No one is listening—why do you address the wall?"

"They are crouching behind it, not missing a word anyway," he said. "If she is a great person, let her be, what do I care? How dare she say that I stole her fowl? What do I want their fowl for? Let them treasure them in their bedroom, I don't care. But if any creature ever strays here, I'll wring its neck, that is certain."

"And what will you do with it?"

"I don't care what. Why should I watch what happens to a headless fowl?"

THE POSTCARD that most upset him was the one which said, after the usual preambles,

> "The black sheep has delivered a lamb, and it is also black, but the shepherd is claiming it: everyday he comes and creates a scene. We have locked up the lamb, but he threatens to break open the door and take away the lamb. He stands in the street and abuses us everyday, and curses our family; such curses are not good for us."

Annamalai interrupted the letter to demand, "Afraid of curses! Haven't you speech enough to out-curse him?" Another postcard three days later said,

> "They came yesterday and carried off the black sheep, the mother, when we were away in the fields."

"Oh, the . . . ," he checked the unholy expression that welled up from the bottom of his heart. "I know how it must have happened. They must have kept the mother tied up in the backyard while locking up the lamb, what use would it be?" He looked at me questioningly. I felt I must ask a question at this point, "Whose sheep was it?"

"The shepherd's, of course, but he borrowed ten rupees pledging it with me. Give me my ten rupees and take away the sheep that's all. How can you claim the lamb? A lamb that is born under our roof is ours."

This was an intricate legal point, I think the only one of its kind in the world, impossible for anyone to give a verdict on or quote precedents, being concerned with a unique kind of mortgage which multiplied in custody. "I have a set of senseless dummies managing my affairs; it is people like my brother who made me want to run away from home."

This proved a lucky break for the lady next door as the following afternoon Annamalai left to seek the company of the level-crossing gateman and other well-wishers, in order to evolve a strategy to confound the erring shepherd in their village. As days passed he began to look more and more tranquil. I sensed that some solution had been found. He explained that someone who had arrived from the village brought the report that they had found one night the black

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sheep being driven off by the butcher, whereupon they waylaid him and carried it back to the bleating lamb at home, where now both the sheep and the lamb were securely locked up, while his brother and the family slept outside on the *pyol* of the house. I couldn't imagine how long they could continue this arrangement, but Annamalai said, "Give me back my ten rupees and take out the sheep."

"What happens to the lamb?"

"It is ours, of course." The sheep was barren until it came to our house, that shepherd boy did not pledge a pregnant sheep."

IT WAS THE TAILOR INCIDENT that ended our association. The postcard from home said:

> "The tailor has sold his machine, things are bound to happen when you sit so far away from your kith and kin. You are allowing all your affairs to be spoilt."

He held his temples between his hands and shut his eyes, unable to stand the shock of this revelation. I asked no questions, he said nothing more and left me, and I saw him going up the slope towards the level-crossing. Later, I got a picture of this transaction little by little.

Years before the tailor had borrowed one hundred rupees from Annamalai for purchasing a sewing machine which was pledged as a security and a bond was signed to that effect. Annamalai's brother accommodated the tailor and the machine on the *pyol* of his house, the tailor renewed the bond from time to time, paid the interest regularly and also a daily rent for occupying the *pyol*. This was a sort of gold-edged security, and Annamalai preserved the bond in the safety of a tin box. When the time for its renewal came, he undertook a trip to his village and came back after a month with a fresh signature on the bond and attested by the village headman. Now the entire basis of their financial relationship was shaken, since the original tailor had decamped and the new tailor did not recognise his indebtedness although he sat on the *pyol* of their house and stitched away without speaking to anyone. With the sheep and the lamb locked up in a room and the interloping tailor on the *pyol* who wouldn't budge, declaring that the rent for his space had been included in the price he had paid for the machine, the members of the household had no place to sleep in. Annamalai indulged in some loud thinking at this point, "Why can't they throw him out? Probably he is a wrestler and my brother is made of straw. It is good that he is not thrown out, as long as he is there, the machine is with us. . . . Also the bond is still there, what can he do? I must go and get this bond renewed in his name. You must let me go."

"I am planning to go to America soon and I can't let you off now," I said firmly. But he pleaded, "Time to renew the bond, master, if it is not done before the end of this month, it will lapse. . . ." I called for the bond in order to have a good look at it. It was for a hundred rupees. I asked, "What does it cost you to reach your place?"

"By the night train it is two rupees and ninety paise to Bangalore, from Bangalore by passenger, it is ten rupees seven paise up to Katpadi. Our train reaches Katpadi at three in the morning. I should wait there until the bus comes. A one and seventy-five paise ride by bus and then travel by jutka some distance and finally footing it home before it gets dark, before robbers come on the road."

"Why don't you go by the Express, it arrives in day time?"

"But it costs sixty paise more. If I had sixty paise I could buy some potatoes and salted peas for the children at home." I wanted to add that if he burnt the bond, instead of renewing it, he could buy a lot more for the same children. I calculated, so far, he must have spent more than the bond amount in railway fare alone, but he brushed aside my economic sophistry with, "You won't know these things, master. As long as I hold the bond, no one can hurt me. I can go to a court."

"And involve yourself in further expenses?" My Western-educated mind could not understand the implications of the situa-

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tion. Finally, in order to dissuade him from going, my habit would be to abandon the house in his charge and go off to the ends of the earth at short notice and return home months later, to find even the scraps of paper in the waste basket preserved with care. Now I felt desolate. So I said, "I will pay you the bond amount, you stay on."

"It is not that. I must go and renew the bond or throw out that interloper and seize the machine. I will come back within ten days. Once the bond is renewed I need not go there again for two years. If I die meanwhile, you take it and collect the money."

"And visit, every two years, Marakonam?" I asked.

He said, "You could go in a motor car, if you choose. Soon they will have a bus road passing very near our village."

I said, "All right, all right, we will think what may be done, you have too many transactions and you have no peace of mind to do your duty here, and you don't care what happens to me. I have to change my plans for your sake, I suppose?" All this was lost on him; it was gibberish as far as he was concerned.

I WAS OBSESSED with flimsy, impalpable things while the solid, four-square realities of the earth were really sheep and tailors and bonds. He started at me pityingly for a moment as at an uncomprehending fool, turned and went downstairs. The next few days I found him sulking. He answered me sharply whenever I spoke to him. He never watered the plants. He ignored the lady next door. More than all, he did not light the fire, as was his custom, in the shade of the pomegranate shrub, for cooking his food in a mud pot. He had taken off the red bandana, and hooded an old blanket over his head as he sat in a corner of the basement room, brooding. When I went out or came in he emerged from the basement and opened the gate mechanically. But no word passed between us. I tried to draw him into a conversation by asking breezily, "Did you hear that they are opening a new store over there?"

"I go nowhere and seek no company. Why should you think I go about, gossiping about shops and things? None of my business."

Another day I asked, "Did anyone telephone?"

"Wouldn't I mention it, if there had been telepoon?" he replied glaring at me and withdrew mumbling, "If you have no trust in me, send me away. Why should I lie that there was no telepoon if there had been one? I am not a rascal. I am also a respectable farmer. Send me away." He looked like someone else under his grey hood, his angry eyes peered at me with hostility. It seemed as if he had propped himself up with an effort all these years, and now was suddenly falling to pieces.

A week later one morning, I noticed him standing outside the gate, his tin trunk and a gunny bag stuffed with odds and ends on the ground at his feet. He wore a dark coat which he had preserved for occasions, a white *dhoti*, and a neat turban on his head. He was nearly unrecognisable in this garb. He said, "I am going by the eight o'clock train today. Here is the key of the basement room." He then threw open the lid of his trunk and said, "See if I have stolen anything of yours, but that lady calls me a fowl thief. I am not a rascal."

"Why do you have to go away like this? Is this how you should leave after fifteen years of service?" I asked. He merely said, "I am not well. I don't want to die in this house and bring it a bad name. Let me go home and die. There they will put new clothes and a fresh garland on my corpse, and carry it in a procession along all the streets of our village with a band. Whereas if I am dead in that basement room while you are in America, I will rot there till the municipal scavengers cart me away. Let me not bring this house an evil reputation. I will go home and die. All the garden tools are in that room. Count them if you like. I am not a thief."

He waited for me to inspect his trunk. I said, "Shut it, I don't have to search your trunk." He hoisted it on his head and placed over it the gunny bundle and started off.

"Wait," I said and ran in to fetch some money. He received the money without a smile and was off.

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Robert Nisbet

Who Killed the Student Revolution?

"THE STUDENT revolution in the United States is dead." When I wrote that sentence last summer,[1] it was in the spirit of prophecy. Now it can only be regarded as a statement of actuality. Nothing that has happened last fall or winter suggests other than that the back of the revolution is broken. A few minor death struggles here and there, a few lashings of the long tail the revolution acquired in its five years. Nothing else. In another year nearly all evidence of the revolution will have been swept from the American campus. Slogans that only a year ago preoccupied faculty meetings from Berkeley to Harvard and that were the subjects of solemn editorials in the American press are now producing only yawns as they make their way to history's capacious dust-bin. Soon it will be hard to remember the names of even the most heroic of principals in the revolution, the most hallowed of sit-ins, building-occupations, archive-spoliations, and millennialist demonstrations on the campus.

Two questions suggest themselves. First, who killed the revolution? Second, who supported the revolution for almost half a decade in a country that must ordinarily be the least revolutionary in character of any in the 20th century? Although my primary concern is with the first of these questions, proper answer to it can be made only by giving some consideration to the second.

BEFORE DEALING with either question, it is only fair to make clear that I have had little relish for the revolution from the start. I have not liked the corruption of student and faculty mind that has all too often been manifest. I have been deeply troubled by the impact of the revolution on the subtle but puissant lines of relationship that normally bind students, faculty, and administration into the fragile entity that is the university in our change-swept, anomic, and power-oriented society of the 20th century.

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From the time the first shot was fired at Berkeley in late 1964, it has been clear that the chief casualty would be academic freedom, which is, at bottom, no more than the university's proper autonomy in the social order. There is no question in my mind that this too little appreciated foundation of the university has been grievously, perhaps irreparably, damaged. And it is a matter of quite evident fact that the bond between university and society is at its lowest ebb in history.

Where others have seen constructive, if occasionally violent, action proceeding from youthful idealism, I have much more often seen destructive, vandalistic action proceeding from adolescent boredom. Where others have thought they could see a grass-roots student quest for academic community, I have, for the most part, seen simple, stark grabbing for power by a small minority of cynical, if usually bright, delinquents whose objective was, instead of money or automobiles, rule of the campus. Others may be able to look back and see the revived spirit of individualism and liberty. For

[1] In an article under the title "The Death of the Student Revolution" published 13 September in *The Montreal Star.*

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my part, I see little more than a combination of adolescent power-thrust and colossal permissiveness by faculty and administration.

At their worst the actions of the student rebels —always a very small minority of the student body—resembled nothing so much as the jackboot authoritarianism of Hitler Youth in the 1920s: complete with shouted obscenities, humiliation of teachers and scholars, desecration of buildings, and instigation of various forms of terror.

These are and have been for five years my general reactions to the so-called academic revolution on the American campus. It is only proper that I should set them down clearly before turning to the subject of the article, which is the nature of the revolution, who caused it, who sustained it, and who, finally, killed it.

By Love Possessed

THE MOST GENERAL cause of the five-year disturbance on the American campus and also, it must be emphasised, of the eventual collapse of the disturbance, lies in the character of the student population of the American university and college. This character is almost solidly middle-class.

The American middle class has many virtues. It is not, however, very good at spawning revolutionaries. It produces more than its share of delinquents and adolescent vandals. But something much more is required, on the evidence of history, in the production of revolutionaries. The middle class is not nearly as proficient at this as is either the European aristocracy (which is quite good at it) or the working class. Moreover, the occasional revolutionary that is produced by the American middle class today tends to be rather soft at the centre and flabby around the edges. Of the tiny group that has shown revolutionary inclinations during the past few years, one may confidently predict a high rate of early defection or flight from the issues through either abject retreat or suicidal behaviour, taking that last in the full sense.

Nothing in the family life from which American college students overwhelmingly derive is likely to fit them for the dedicated, disciplined, and demanding life of the hard-core revolutionary. This family life is an amalgam of almost desperate dependence on the marks of affluence and of almost equally desperate dependence on the children in the family. The first tends to produce a considerable burden of guilt—often expiated these days by doctrinaire political radicalism in parents—and the second leads to a magnification of the parent-child tie beyond anything known in the history of the family. The ambience of the present middle-class family in America is love: love, that is, for the children. It is not merely love, it is undiluted, unconditional, unbreakable love by parents of child. There may be many good things to say about this. But, clearly, such a family structure, with its possessions-oriented, children-dominated, guilt-tinged, and boredom-producing values, is less likely to yield revolutionaries than it is juvenile delinquents.

Or else (as is far more common) rather conservative, conformist, and almost infinitely agreeable mass-children. Tocqueville foresaw that the great danger of democracy in the future would be, not its proneness to frequent revolution, but rather its proneness to a homogeneity of type and immobility of structure through which even the most energetic minds would find it difficult to break free. Despite newspaper stories (of all participants in the campus revolution, newspaper reporters were, as I shall stress below, the most credulous), the overwhelming majority of students, even at a Berkeley or Columbia, were not interested in any reform, much less revolution, on the campus. Bystander was their principal role. And those who were driven to action, the relative handful of the revolt-minded, had neither the necessary qualities for revolutionary leadership (delinquency, yes; revolution, no) nor the capacity to stir it up in others. Middle-class background saw to that.

The nearest to an *academically*-revolutionary cry from the leaders of the revolt—and, it must be acknowledged, from a rather substantial group of students not themselves revolt-minded —was the cry for "relevance." The curriculum, it was said, must be made relevant to the interests and needs of students. I would not wish to even guess at the vast number of newspaper editorials and television commentaries that solemnly and dutifully echoed this cry. It was appealing.

It was also appalling. For invariably what the student cry for relevance turned out to be was the all-too-familiar middle-class child's cry to be entertained, to be stimulated, above all, to be *listened to*, no matter what or how complex the subject at hand. Having become accustomed in their homes to get attention to whatever was on their minds, and of course incessant and

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lavish praise for their "brightness," is it not to be expected that when the children go off to the university the same attention should be given their interests and needs?

AT THE PRESENT TIME there is a widespread interest in so-called "sensitivity" and "encounter" types of class—even of whole schools and colleges. *Community* is, of course, the talisman of all that is good and just. These departures from curriculum and scholarship are not merely vagrant exercises in irrationalism. More fundamentally, they are efforts on the part of middle-class children to be rescued from loneliness. This parallels efforts to be rescued from boredom through courses that are "relevant."

Being alone is for most middle-class students a deeply disquieting experience. This can make going off to the university a sometimes traumatic experience. For so many years have adolescents known the warmth of parental love, praise, adulation, and instant recognition of every brilliant or profound utterance at the dinner table—not to mention instant forgiveness for all sins and delinquencies—that entering college can be like a plunge into icy waters. The vast burgeoning on American campuses since about 1960 of all the multitudinous and diverse "welfare" offices—concerned foremost with student adjustment and happiness—can only be explained, it seems to me, by desire to provide psychologically-needy students with surrogates of Mom and Dad. Revamping curricula and colleges into student-planned "sensitivity," "great books," and "encounter" groups is little more, I should think, than a kind of final solution for this middle-class sprung ache to be recognised—constantly and everlastingly.

None of this—family background or college environment—is likely to be a sufficient context for appearance of either revolutionary masses or revolutionary leaders. Still, no one would wish to deny the fact that very real disturbances took place or that a large share of American attention—and apprehension and hostility—was given to these disturbances. I turn to them now.

The Romance of Politics

AMONG THE active and precipitating causes of the campus disturbances, academic and curricular issues had very little influence or staying power. I want to emphasise this fact. For almost beyond count are the editorials and commentaries by American news media, the articles in alumni magazines, the agenda of faculty meetings, and the guilt-stricken, soul-searching articles by intellectuals, academic and other, in which the central point is the *supposed academic roots* of the "revolution" in the American university.

Overwhelmingly, the objectives of the Mario Savios and the Jerry Rubins and the Mark Rudds were, in the beginning at least (until substantial segments of the faculty chose to endow these objectives with academic essence), not academic at all but political. The objectives were not reform of the university in the first—or last—instances; they were, preposterous as it may today seem, objectives of overthrow of the surrounding social order. It was political romanticism, not academic, that provided the motivating circumstances.

In some ways this is the strangest of all aspects of the revolution: the fact that its roots were not at all in academic deprivation but that, from the very beginning, they were widely supposed to be. I am not forgetting the skill with which leaders of the revolts occasionally seized upon academic slogans and rallying-cries. The photograph of the student with a sign across his chest reading "DO NOT FOLD, BEND, OR MUTILATE" got a great deal of mileage in the American press. So did a good many other gimmicks and subterfuges. If there is any real lesson emerging from the past five years it is, I think, the ease with which supposedly tough, intellectually sophisticated newspaper and television reporters can be captured by youth.

The American university student is, and has been for many years, one of the freest—and, at the same time, most carefully nurtured and cherished—beings in Western history. Nevertheless, it proved astonishingly easy to convince a great many newspaper reporters and editorial writers that he was in fact some variant of an Asiatic peasant, even, as one highly successful piece of Left publicity had it, a "nigger." (Of all the trivialisations of the black cause in the United States, the most farcical was this one: the likening of the pampered American student's role to that of the Negro in the Deep South. But a lot of people, including faculty members, were for a time convinced.)

The point is, the student revolution was never genuinely interested in academic reforms. Its

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leaders were far more interested in the extramural issues of Negro civil rights, Viet Nam, and in broadcasting ideas of world revolution drawn from their reading of Mao, Fanon, Marcuse, and other millennialists—writers who, it must be confessed, had had something more substantial in mind when they issued the call for revolution than the position of the American middle-class student in college—than they were in achieving any actual academic reforms.

IT IS WELL to remember that the first great episode of the student revolution, which was at Berkeley in late 1964, began with not even a pretence of academic objectives. The revolutionary forays into classroom and community led by Mario Savio and his fellows had nothing to do at first with *academic* issues, with the plight of the student, the irrelevance of courses and curricula, and the research relationships between university and Federal government. The Berkeley phase of the revolution had nothing to do with these; and it had everything to do with the right claimed by a small number of students, fresh from recent (and decidedly strenuous, sometimes bloody) engagements in rural Mississippi and on Automobile Row in San Francisco, to be free to mount attack on the social order with the campus as their base and also sanctuary. They were refused this claimed right, and thus began, in overt form, the student revolution.

Since this essential point has been so widely missed by other commentators, I again stress it. *The so-called academic revolution of the students was not academic at all.* It was in fact a misbegotten, preposterously conceived, hopelessly romantic effort to effect a revolution in the social order, in political and economic society, using the campus as launching pad and as refuge. For obvious and inevitable reasons this use of the campus was denied the student insurrectionaries. Only at this point, when, in fury at having been denied such use of the Berkeley campus by Chancellor Edward Strong (who lost his administrative position in due time for his courage and resoluteness), the insurrectionaries turned on the administration at Berkeley, could anything faintly resembling an academic revolution be said to have begun. But even then there were no academic goals and aspirations.

Nor were there any real academic goals during the five years which were to follow the Berkeley uprising. Why should there have been —except as sops to the more moderate faculty and as bait for the media representatives? From Mario Savio to Mark Rudd one finds little but cold hatred in the minds of the student leaders for the university and its purposes. They were not interested, really, in revolutionising the university. Their interest—a projection of adolescent romantic fantasy—was in revolutionising a social order and, with this, in destroying the university utterly.

ONE CAN ONLY MARVEL at the discrepancy between real aims and those aims for which the student revolution was to receive credit. What Mario Savio and his fellow-revolutionists desired was, as I have said, use of the university campus as a base and sanctuary for revolution in the social order. If there is any evidence of their dislike of university courses and curricula (all were excellent students) prior to about January 1965, immediately after the first great Berkeley outburst, I cannot find it. They did not object to university *academic* practices for the simple reason that these, save as opportunities to indulge intellectual reading-interests, did not matter to them. What mattered was—revolution! Revolution on, first, a local, then national, and finally a world scale. *This* was what the reading of Lenin, Trotsky, Fanon, Mao, Che, and Marcuse had helped stimulate. They could not have cared less about the trivial things that faculty committees on reform of curricula went frenziedly to work on, starting about the spring of 1965.

I can do nothing but honour the student insurrectionary leaders. Wrong, juvenile, sometimes evil, I am obliged to regard them. But never stupid! They were, and no doubt are to this moment, as bright a crew of predators and pirates as our country has seen in many decades.

BUT WHAT, in retrospect, is one to say of those faculty committees, student demonstrations, newspaper editorials, alumni meetings, agitated conferences of intellectuals, and others which saw in all this, not the ends which were frankly if cynically proclaimed by the student revolutionists themselves, but instead a noble crusade for reform of the university, its teaching, its curricula, and its relation to humane values? Numberless are the committee reports by faculty, the manifestos by genuinely concerned students, alumni, and

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public groups, and the columns, news-analyses, and editorials by the media which chose to believe, despite perfectly lucid declarations by the revolutionists, that what was really at stake was the long-needed academic reform of the university. What delicious humour all these must have aroused in the minds of Mario Savio and his successors.

Overnight such places as Berkeley, which for years had known large student bodies, lecture courses, and research-oriented faculty, but which had nevertheless prospered, had withal been immensely attractive year after year to fresh generations of students, were discovered to be impossibly bureaucratic, aloof, impersonal, and guilty of a totalitarianism that might have done honour to the Nazis.

But all good things come to an end in time. I would guess that the events of spring '69, particularly at Harvard and Cornell, were the beginning of the end. The weird discrepancy could not survive—except in a few minds—for much longer; the strain on credulity was becoming too great even for liberal faculty and newspaper reporters. Ivy League intellectuals could look upon the far-off events of Berkeley, San Francisco State, and Wisconsin with that peculiar detachment regarding the academic universe which is their hallmark. But when the insurrection hit, first, Columbia, then Harvard and Cornell, the time for detachment was over. The broad gulf betwen actuality and pretension could no longer be missed. The time for sympathy, detachment, fine neutrality had clearly come to an end.

This, then, seems to me to be the second, and perhaps most direct reason for the collapse of the "student revolution." *It was not really a student revolution*. It was an insurrection, yes, and one engineered by individuals who happened to be students, off and on at least, but it was not a revolt that arose from any clear interest-orientation of students, or from any visible commitment to the values of the academic world. Revolutions that succeed in history—whether religious (as during the Reformation), political (as in France at the end of the 18th century), economic (as in the liberation of peasantry and working class), or racial (as in the contemporary American Negro social movement)—are revolutions in which there is reasonably close and persisting relation between aims and actual interest-roots. No such relation existed in the so-called student revolution of 1964–69.

Blacks & Whites

SOMETHING MUST BE SAID about the participation of Negro students. The disturbances could not have lasted more than a few weeks had it not been for the very substantial—if utterly non-academic—themes provided by, first, the Negro civil rights movement and, second, the curse of American engagement in Viet Nam. I shall come to the second a little later. The blacks deserve prior attention.

Of all participants in the campus revolution, Negro students alone, it seems to me, had any *functional* relation to the events of the revolution. But this comes overwhelmingly from the fact that they were in action not as black *students* but as *black* students. The difference is, of course, major. There was thus very commonly a much clearer sense of objective and of strategy on the part of the blacks than of the whites. Whereas white students, accustomed to unconditional love in their rearing, had essentially unconditional (certainly unformed) attitudes, black students did not. The blacks increasingly manifested a sense of concrete goal, of victory seen in the mature terms of specific gains for blacks. For blacks the campus was a valuable place in which to continue, even widen, a revolutionary struggle in the United States that was also taking place in the ghetto, in industries, in labour unions, and in government halls. Theirs was, in short, a revolution in substance as well as aspiration. It proceeded directly from the historic role of the Negro in American society: subjugation as nearly total as any that can easily be imagined.

But this, while bound to keep the flame of black revolution alight, and also to make for goals capable of reasonable clarity, of at least theoretical attainment, could not help but lead to an ever-widening division between black and white revolutionists. For, as I have noted, the latter being by nurture and temperament almost incapable of seeing goals concretely and conditionally, could hardly help but become in due time an embarrassment to the black cause. The disturbances at Columbia University highlighted this division between blacks—generally, a tightly disciplined group with clear-cut objectives—and whites.

It would not do, of course, to carry this analysis too far—yet. But the division I speak of is nonetheless important in understanding the collapse of the campus revolution. From now on, it seems clear, the black revolution on the

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campus will be simply a campaign in the wider revolution that is the whole Negro movement in our time. It will tend to be ever more deeply rooted in aspirations peculiar to *black* students and intellectuals. There will be, especially given the intense cultural nationalism of blacks now developing at fast rate, very little room in the black revolution, whether on campus or off, for the guilt-seized, obeisant, but largely ineffectual white. Blacks no longer need whites to conduct the revolution. Whatever may be black revolutionary dislike for white members of the *Establishment*, it is as nothing compared with black dislike of white *revolutionists*. This last is, I believe, a vital point. It is also a corollary of one of the most vital points in the understanding of all revolutions in history: that intensities of hatred within revolutionary ranks tend in a short time to become much greater than those of revolutionaries towards the common enemy.

FEW WILL HAVE FAILED to note the conspicuous deterioration within the past year or two of white leadership of the student revolution. Whereas some fairly impressive (from a purely technical point of view) figures were produced by white students in the very early stages, chiefly at Berkeley, the more recent types, at Columbia, Harvard, and Cornell, have been rather pathetic. They are so obviously wallowing in guilt-driven desire to serve black intellectuals that the results range from the distasteful to the comical. Overwhelmingly the products, as I have emphasised, of affluent, ever-loving, ever-tender, ever-permissive—and generally leftist—parents, one often had the impression that the white students were more interested, through their depredations, in pleasing Mom and Dad, in giving their parents something to boast about at cocktail parties, than in much else. And, as has become widely evident within recent months, such white students, like left-leaning white intellectuals generally, have become figures of contempt and derision in black intellectual and revolutionary circles.

The Negro rights struggle has a long way to go yet: in the nation's schools (especially in Northern schools where segregation is beyond Supreme Court power and seemingly immovable), in many remaining areas of industry and the professions, in the huge labour unions, and in the final cleaning out of the black ghettos. But, to put the matter bluntly, the blacks today require little help that they cannot themselves provide in what remains of the single most important social movement of the 20th century. After all, there is a Negro on the Supreme Court, another holding Cabinet status in Washington, a considerable number of black mayors in key cities, and, at this moment, some 500 elected black officials in the Southern states themselves. Whatever else the Negro movement requires, help from adolescent whites on the campus who have managed to creep and crawl to the top of, say, *S.D.S.*, is not a part of it.

Viet Nam

THE OTHER EXTRA-MURAL CAUSE that kept the campus revolts going for more than four years was, of course, Viet Nam. The campus was a place where demonstrations against this war could be conducted with relative impunity. Mobilisations that, four years ago, would have been put down bloodily had they taken place in working-class or suburban areas, or in the heart of a city, went on regularly under the benign and maternal gaze of Alma Mater.

The student Left saw American engagement in Viet Nam as one more evidence of the intolerable corruption of the business-oriented middle class. To be sure, the students were quite incorrect about this relation of the war and the business class. The business-as-usual, money-making, luxury-loving American middle class does not like war any more than it does revolution. Each disrupts, distracts from, and threatens middle-class values. War is, today as always, essentially a product of the military mind working in conjunction with the political intellectual. Serious and nearly irreversible commitment in Viet Nam began only about 1960 when for the first time there was added to the military mind in the Pentagon the extraordinary political intensity of the Bundys, Rostows, and Rusks: not one a product of the business class in America; all of them keenly interested, as political intellectuals invariably are interested, in serving, and in broadening, political power. Moving at first in low gear with small forces, then, increasingly, in high gear under Johnson—with, to be sure, the inevitable and predictable defections of some from both military and intellectual ranks—the United States found itself by 1964 in that classic, textbook position of absolute untenability: fighting

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a land war in Asia. Once the full implications of this appalling folly were grasped by intellectuals and generals in the government—those, that is, who had not already cut and run—the ultimate objective became that of getting out with the least possible damage to commitments, military forces, and, of course, diplomatic face.

Viet Nam was a natural for the leaders of the revolt on the campus. And they can hardly be blamed for seizing upon it. If no one else would attack the highly esteemed likes of the Kennedys, the Bundys, McNamaras, Rostows, and Rusks, they would. And they did. With impressive success, generally speaking. For there is little question in my mind that had it not been for the passionate attack from the student Left, the curse upon America that began substantially in the early 1960s might well have continued much farther into the future—with who knows what added elements to the curse—than it is now clear will be the case.

The political Left, it has been said, will never forgive Nixon for robbing it of the one substantial cause it had, the one rock on which might have been built a broad-gauged revolution in this country. But Nixon *has* robbed the Left of this issue—and also the related issues of the draft and of arms control with Russia. I do not know when the last American soldier will be evacuated from Viet Nam; no one can know. But this much is clear: the by now overall, deeply committed, irreversible, objective of the United States is to get clear of Viet Nam as quickly as due regard for safety and logistics permits.

Demonstrations will doubtless continue. But, as the very recent mobilisation of some quarter-million people in Washington D.C. made evident, such demonstrations are now respectable. What the student Left began has now been taken over securely and irrevocably by the middle-class moderates, by the churches, and by a substantial fraction of what is being called these days "the silent majority." Jerry Rubin knew exactly what the situation was (lack of brightness, as I have said, is no failing of the student Left) when, in Washington on the occasion of huge and peaceful mobilisation, he spat out disgustedly that "peace has become respectable!"

So it has. And with this major achievement, the last hope of the student Left in continuing their revolt, of making actual their adolescent fantasies of permanent revolution, has fled. Now there is nothing left to base even a major campus building-occupation on, much less a full-blown reign of terror.

The Professor

In accounting for the death of the so-called revolution on the campus we cannot afford to neglect the role of the faculty. I said at the beginning that we find the causes of the collapse of the revolution closely related to the forces which for nearly five years kept the revolution going. Among these is the university faculty—or, rather, of a substantial and powerful segment of the faculty.

As the faculty gave in the beginning, so it took away in due time. Without faculty stimulus, advice, financial contributions, and other forms of assistance, the student revolt could never really have got off the ground. It will be known to posterity—to the extent that it is remembered at all—as the student revolution. It should be known as the student-faculty revolution.

Not, obviously, all faculty; not even a majority of faculty. The actual number of key figures on the faculty, whether at Berkeley, San Francisco State, Harvard or Columbia would appear to be rather small. But it was, I repeat, a powerful minority, often containing within it Nobel-Prize winners and others of equal stature. We could not possibly understand the early successes at Berkeley—such successes as the humiliation of the Academic Senate, the deposing of President Kerr, Chancellors Strong and Meyerson, as well as a host of lesser fry—except in terms of the very substantial assistance from eminently willing, powerful, internationally renowned, and immensely prestigious faculty members at Berkeley. Most of them have long since fled to other campuses or retreated behind locked Institute doors, but in the beginning they served the student revolutionists well. Granted that they only rarely ventured forth into the open, and that under the iron security of academic tenure they had nothing whatever to fear from administration and Regents, their role in the revolution was a vital one.

In retrospect, I think the major contribution of the faculty to the student revolution was the priceless insistence that all acts of the students, however vandalistic, however destructive of the civil order, be regarded as, not the offences against public law they were in fact, *but as academic-student behaviour*, and hence deserv-

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ing of the university's full protection. This was an insistence that, having been sold to a large majority of the Berkeley faculty and to high administrative figures, including Regents, proved invaluable to the early life of the revolution. Repeatedly, acts on the part of student revolutionists which would have earned them severe jail sentences had they taken place in most sectors of society, were dealt with as behaviour falling somewhere between the hoary category of student prank and the perhaps regrettable but nonetheless forgivable excesses of profound student idealism.

I AM NOT TRYING to make the faculty into villains or fools. There is no question but that motives of highest rectitude often actuated faculty members in their support of students long after the justice and wisdom of faculty support of these students had vanished. Faculty members are properly concerned with academic freedom, with freedom of learning and teaching and thinking. There is a very old tradition in the university—going back to the 12th and 13th centuries—whereby students and faculty members protect themselves from the towns-people and other outsiders. There is old and highly honourable support for the view that the university is a sanctuary.

But the university cannot be both sanctuary and staging-ground for revolutionary attack upon society. And the canons of academic order cannot easily be invoked within its walls for acts which are clearly destructive of civil order. I know very well indeed that the more brilliant of the student revolutionists were aware of this from the start. What they could not know, what they would not have dared to guess or even hope for, was the sheer length of time they nevertheless managed to have the best of both worlds.

But they no longer have it. It is increasingly difficult to find even a handful of faculty members that have not become hostile in the extreme to the manifestations of adolescent delinquency that for more than four years passed for revolutionary and progressive ardour. The memory is too galling of buildings occupied and polluted, of library files overturned and damaged, of offices ransacked, of fellow-teachers humiliated in classroom and in public, and of one concession after another being made a fresh base from which to declare war on the authority of the university.

The sight of police called, of student heads clubbed, of tear gas in the air, of militant gatherings dispersed through whatever armed means, all of this was once deeply repugnant to faculty members. It is still repugnant. I hope it will always be repugnant.

But it is not as repugnant as it once was. And this is the key to the matter. Familiarity breeds at least tacit acceptance among even the most fastidiously liberal of faculty minds. What was perceived as revolutionary or reformist action three years ago is now perceived as vandalism. The overwhelming, the nearly total, majority of the American university faculty will regard such action henceforth with undiluted hostility. As I said above, in the American university the faculty giveth and the faculty taketh away.

The Rise of Power

THE FINAL REASON for declaring the student revolution in America dead also arises directly from the character of the middle class. It is the fear of a moral void, of anarchy, of authority too long flouted—and, arising directly from this, the almost instinctive turning to power for protection. It may be police power, or the power of the Federal government in matters long left to local government or voluntary association; it may be the power of the state legislature invoked in spheres where it has never before existed, or it may be the power of the trustees or administration in the university over matters traditionally left to ordinary processes of use and wont, to corporate faculty or the students. But power.

The uses of power have multiplied within the past four years. So too have the contexts of acceptance of power. And this last, obviously, is the more frightening circumstance. In some thirty-five years of residence in the University of California, I have never seen any aspect of academic life produce as nearly monolithic a public response as did the Berkeley uprising in 1964. Governor Reagan's popularity in California—higher this year even than last—rests to a large degree on the average citizen's confidence that he is the sworn enemy of student violence. His election three years ago was in vital degree the result of his repeated focusing on what he and millions of others in California regarded as the breakdown of the university's

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indigenous system of authority. The one college president in recent history whose prestige is national, a prestige that has been fully substantiated by newspaper polls, is President Hayakawa of San Francisco State College. Leaving to one side the very real capabilities Hayakawa manifests as an administrator, not to mention his considerable status as a scholar, the decisive fact is the *image* he has left with, not merely Californians but Americans at large. And this image is one of power: quick, resourceful, unyielding power.

The American people are used to scenes of domestic violence. America is, it has to be confessed, a rather violence-prone nation. It has been since its founding as a national state. Nor are Americans unused to spectacles of student turbulence, which go far back in the history of Harvard, Yale, and other early American colleges. But I can think of no kind of violence —religious, racial, or academic—that has ever produced the national response that the university revolts have since 1964. It may be that the people, with intuitive wisdom, perceived something very different about these revolts; something that went beyond the boundaries of campus and touched upon the very essence of those middle-class values which are the substance of American society.

Power has greatly increased in scope during the past five years in the United States. Police forces have been enlarged; the *technology* of law-enforcement has been immensely improved. Witness only what Mayor Lindsay in New York calls his "war room," a technological marvel that has almost every part of New York City under constant surveillance and that makes effective deployment of police a mere matter of minutes. Power has also become more sophisticated within recent years. It is highly unlikely that the clumsiness of early police responses to campus disturbances will be repeated. There are better, less visible, less troubling (to middle-class conscience), and far more effective ways now at police disposal. Laws have been passed at both national and state level, administrative rulings have been handed down by the innumerable agencies with which the contemporary university deals, university administrations have been decisively toughened. These are real and immediately verifiable consequences of 1964–69.

FAR MORE IMPORTANT than these, however, is the widening popular acceptance of the contexts of power: even power in its more brutal manifestations. Every newspaper poll taken revealed that a substantial majority of the American people approved of the Chicago police actions they saw on television and read about in the newspapers in the summer of 1968. If they could approve the ugly and vicious buffooneries that generally passed for police action in Chicago, it is not difficult to assume their approval of the far more sophisticated techniques of police power that exist today in most cities in the world. And these are techniques of power that have thoroughly permeated the American campus. That is, I think, the single greatest change I have seen in thirty-five years on the university campus.

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Ali A. Mazrui

The Robes of Rebellion

Sex, Dress, and Politics in Africa

"FAR AWAY, many dust-laden miles away in Arusha some little man in the administration, such as are to be found in all the governments the world over, in his little white shirt and collar and his little Western tie, or in his national dress that gives him prickly heat around his neck whenever the weather gets excessively hot and humid, has decided that the Masai must wear clothes."[1]

This bitter lament against a new policy statement from Tanzania early in 1968 formed part of the debate which was unleashed by the declaration of that policy. The authorities in Tanzania had decided that the Masai had been permitted naked indulgence for far too long; that their withdrawal from normal attire constituted a withdrawal from the mainstream of progress in their countries. It had therefore been decreed that no Masai men or women were to be allowed into the Arusha metropolis wearing limited skin clothing or a loose blanket. The Masailand Area Commissioner, Mr. Iddi Sungura, kept on issuing a number of warnings to the Masai threatening retribution if they clung to awkward clothing and soiled pigtailed hair.

From prominent Masai across the border in Kenya came protests. A Kenya Masai Member of Parliament holding a ministerial position, Mr. Stanley Oloitipitip, asserted that Tanzania was denying the Masai the right to be themselves. Another Kenyan, Mr. John Keen, threatened to turn up at Arusha, the new capital of the East African Community, dressed in his Masai attire and see what the authorities there would do to him. Tanzanian authorities in turn replied to this debate across the border by saying that such interference in the policies of Tanzania towards modernisation and national integration was totally unacceptable. The Masai of Kenya could remain in their pristine traditionality, but the Masai of Tanzania were to be converted to the trappings of modernity.[2]

This whole controversy on the future apparel of the Masai has links with an important theme in the history of Nationalism and of revolutionary fervour. My present concern is not with the Masai controversy as such; it is with this wider theme of the place of dress and nakedness in the history of thought. In its ramifications, this is a human phenomenon which has contacts with such important issues as, first, *authenticity*; secondly, *identity*; and thirdly, *rebellion,* both religious and political.

Nature Uncovered

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND some of the implications of the concept of authenticity we have to relate it to intellectual foils. What is authentic is often deemed to be that which is not artificial. That which is not artificial is often deemed to be that which is natural. Major intellectual movements in world history have romanticised nearness to nature and lamented the growth of civilisation and industrialisation because of the presumed concomitant growth of artificiality in man's life. The idea that expanding complexities of social organisation maximise man's distance from the essence of things has been discerned in the works of political philosophers like Rousseau, and of poets like Words-

[1] Richard Brooke-Edwards, "A Fourth Freedom," *Transition* (No. 34, 1968), p. 39.

[2] *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), 8 and 16 February 1968.

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worth. The romanticisation of the Noble Savage was at the heart of these critiques of developed life. Rousseau sometimes argues that civilised life enfeebles man and makes him too dependent on gadgets and artificial comforts. Equipped with all his artificial aids civilised man is indeed at a great advantage, but if you stripped him of these, and confronted him with bare nature, the effeminate ways of civilisation will expose his lack of vigour. In Rousseau's own words (in *The Social Contract*):

> Give civilised man time to gather all his machines about him, and he will no doubt easily beat the savage; but if you were to see a still more unequal contest, set them together naked and unarmed, and you will soon see the advantage of having all our forces constantly at our disposal, of being always prepared for every event, and of carrying oneself, as it were, perpetually whole and entire about one.

Sometimes the Noble Savage was placed by philosophers and literary figures in the Americas. The Noble Savage was the Indian (in Alexander Pope's words).

... whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky-way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topt hill an humbler heav'n....

(Essay on Man, 1732)

But with the greater interest in Africa which came with the great debates about the slave trade, the Noble Savage in the European imagination came to be located also in the African continent. The African came to be regarded as natural man *par excellence*. He might lack the capacity to blush, but commanded full ability to be bold. In the words of the poets Day and Bicknell (in 1773),

What tho' no rosy tints adorn their face,
No silken ringlets shine with flowing grace?
Yet of etherial temper are their souls,
And in their veins the tide of honour rolls;
And valorous kindles there the hero's flame,
Contempt of death, and thirst for martial fame.

In our own time the image of the African as a child of nature has been inherited by the movement of Négritude, of which the most distinguished spokesman on the African continent is Leopold Senghor, the poet-President of Senegal. Senghor defines Négritude as "the sum total of the values of the civilisation of the African world.... More precisely, it was the communal warmth, the image-symbol and the cosmic rhythm which instead of dividing and sterilising, unified and made fertile.[3]

And Jean-Paul Sartre, the French philosopher, also draws attention to the "proud claim of non-technicalness" which is at the heart of Négritude. The nearness to nature is persistent. In the words of Sartre "in concerning himself first with himself, the Negro proposes to gain nature in gaining himself." Sartre then proceeds (in *Black Orpheus*) to cite the poet who said "they abandon themselves, possessed to the essence of all things ignoring surfaces but possessed by the movement of all things,

Needless, taking no account, but playing the game of the world.
truly the elder sons of the world
porous to every breath of the world
flesh of the flesh of the world throbbing with the very
movement of the world.

The nearness to nature which is attributed to the Negro becomes associated with spontaneity; spontaneity finds expression sometimes in responsive sexuality; and sexuality connotes the nakedness of things. The entire life style of the Negro is romanticised into one constant work of natural creation. To quote Sartre again, "Techniques have contaminated the white worker, but the black remains the great male of the earth, the sperm of the world. His existence—it is the great vegetal patience; his work —it is the repetition from year to year of the sacred coitus. He creates and is fertile because he creates. The sexual pantheism of these poets is without doubt that which first strikes the reader. To labour, to plant, to eat, is to make love with nature...."

Behold yourself
Erect and naked
Shaft you are and you remember
But you are in reality the child of this fecund shadow
Which feeds of the milk of the moon
Then you slowly shape yourself into a rod
On this low wall entwined by the dreams of flowers
And the perfume of the idle summer.

[3] L. S. Senghor, *Prose and Poetry* (tr. Reed & Wake, 1965), p. 99.

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If the Negro is sometimes conceived as a symbol of masculinity, Africa is sometimes conceived in decidedly feminine terms. But in both conceptions the theme of nakedness is again recurrent. Leopold Senghor thinks of his part of Africa in such feminine terms. In the words of his famous poem,

Naked woman, black woman
Clothed with your colour which is life, with your form which is beauty!
In your shadow I have grown up; the gentleness of your hands was laid over my eyes....

Naked woman, black woman
I sing your beauty that passes, the form that I fix in the Eternal,
Before jealous Fate turn you to ashes to feed the roots of life.

The Dress of Identity

BUT IT IS NOT SIMPLY the issue of authenticity which is at stake in this area of political argumentation; it is also the issue of identity. Identity is sometimes in regard to a particular individual and the kind of quality and personality he has; and sometimes it is in regard to a member of a particular community, nationality, or religious affiliation and the cultural traits exhibited by such a community. The identity of the individual on his own may indeed include these traits inherited from his cultural group, but in so far as they define his own distinctive personality, these traits are combined with other qualities. Whether a man is temperamentally cheerful or moody, whether he is warm-hearted or reserved, whether he is meticulous and formal in his behaviour, or easy-going and jovial—all these are intensely personal characteristics which may not necessarily be derived from the social group to which he belongs. The characteristics may sometimes be accentuated or mitigated by cultural factors, but in general there are personality factors in each individual which are distinctive to the person and not typical of the community from which he springs.

Dress is related to this issue of the distinctive person. There has been a school of thought which has assumed that you can indeed judge a man by the way he dresses: "For the apparel oft proclaims the man" (Polonius). A man of good taste might therefore be judged by the way he dresses. The class to which he belongs might be discernible by his general attire. In

Boston

NEGRO STUDENTS *at the city's 16 high schools changed their coats and ties for African dress yesterday. Principals of the schools agreed Wednesday to allow the students to wear African-style clothes, but another issue, whether Negro students would be allowed to form all-black student unions, was not decided.*

The dress issue precipitated racial disturbances last week in Boston public schools. Mayor Kevin H. White has formed a special high-school grievance committee to inquire into the racial troubles.

Algiers

ALGERIA CONSIDERS *herself one of the most revolutionary of Arab or African countries. A visitor, however, is struck here as elsewhere in the developing world by the less-than-revolutionary.*

A lot of women, for instance, even in "European" Algiers, wear the haik*—the enveloping white robe that covers the head and the whole body and is worn with a white lace veil, the size of a large handkerchief, over the face. You ask around and you find that many Algerian women feel the* haik *is part of the puritan image created by President Houari Boumedienne. They say the image encourages a traditional-minded father to keep his daughter at home to keep house for the family until she marries the man the family finds for her, rather than to put her through university or let her take some other emancipated role in the developing society.*

Old Algeria hands admit that the liberation of women has gone a lot further in neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia than it has here, that Boumedienne does not encourage the modern girls as deposed President Ahmed Ben Bella did. They insist, however, that if you measure progress by appropriately small units, the Algerian woman has come a long way.

The mother may still wear the haik*, but she does not hesitate to be seen outdoors with her daughter or even her sister in Western dress. And in more and more cases the* haik *is a* mini-haik*: the white folds stop at, and reveal, a shapely calf, and the dress underneath is from Paris. On Sundays you see Algerian girls on the beaches in bikinis—that never happened before independence.*

Progress must be measured in small units because even in revolutionary countries the desire for progress runs up against the stone wall of tradition.... The visitor to Algiers may draw a wry smile from the fact that nostalgia for the past is more easily sensed than enthusiasm for the revolutionary future.

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general etiquette, dress is sometimes related to the particular occasion to which a man is called upon to respond. A man turning up at a formal dinner in a bush shirt is therefore dismissed in Western terms as Bohemian. Some restaurants in the more Westernised parts of Africa would insist on a tie (and perhaps a jacket) for dinner, but not necessarily for lunch. The two meals have been ritualised and permitted to demand distinctive attire for those who participate in the ritual. In some British universities the academic gown becomes important for some ceremonial occasions, and a less flamboyant gown becomes indispensable at high table for some of the college dinners. The person who ignores these conventions is again judged to be inadequately attuned to the civilised values of the society.

But these very examples themselves illustrate how closely related are the *personal* aspects of dress to the *cultural*. The identity which is established by personal attire sometimes presupposes the tastes and norms of the society as a whole. The Bohemian who turns up for dinner without a jacket or a tie is a Bohemian by the canons of the society *within* which he is operating. But as *between* one society and another there may also be a place for dress as a distinctive differentiating characteristic. It was the late Frantz Fanon (the revolutionary thinker from Martinique and participant in the Algerian Insurrection) who once said:

> The way people clothe themselves, together with the traditions of dress and finery that custom implies, constitutes the most distinctive form of a society's uniqueness, that is to say the one that is the most immediately perceptible. Within the general pattern of a given custom, there are of course always modifications of detail, innovations which in highly developed societies are the mark of fashion. But the effect as a whole remains homogeneous, and the great areas of civilisation, immense cultural regions, can be grouped together on the basis of original, specific techniques of men's and women's dress.[4]

In the streets of Marrakesh and Algiers one therefore often knows that one is in a Muslim country. If one opened one's eyes in Bombay or New Delhi, the dress of many of the passers-by would be part of the revelation that one was in the midst of an Indian civilisation. An exposure to Disneyland or other pleasure centres of California would soon familiarise the stranger to some of the dress manifestations of the American sub-culture.

In reality the idea of differentiating civilisations by the way their members dress is rapidly being antiquated by events. Perhaps the most successful cultural bequest from the West to the rest of the world has in fact been precisely Western dress. Mankind is getting rapidly homogenised by the sheer acquisition of the Western shirt and the Western trousers. The Japanese businessman, the Arab Minister, the Indian lawyer, the African civil servant have all found a common denominator in the Western suit.

To some extent this is what made the case of the Masai an elegant exercise in sheer cultural obstinacy. Here was a people who refused to climb on the bandwagon of Westernised apparel. The Area Commissioner of Masailand in Tanzania was particularly frustrated to note that even those Masai who had been exposed to modern education continued their attachment to Masai modes of personal preparation. Area Commissioner Sungura admitted to being surprised to find among a group of "bright-looking English-speaking secondary school-taught Masai youth" a young man called George Koyo who was complete with ochre-soiled clothing and hair, "showing no sign whatsoever of his education which is better than mine."

The whole Tanzanian policy of seeking to "civilise the Masai" by getting them to wear trousers seemed to be a direct attack on the most distinguishing aspect of the cultural identity of the Masai. Surprise was widely expressed that Tanzania, which in many ways had stood for the African right to be distinctive, should at the same time have embarked on one of the most blatant acts of enforced de-culturation since the great debate on female circumcision among the Kikuyu in Kenya half-a-century earlier. In fact one participant in the debate on the Masai, O. N. Njau, argued in a letter in the *East African Standard* (17 February 1968) the futility of enforced de-culturation by citing the example of the circumcision debate.

> Far back in the early 1930s the missionaries saw the need of advising Kikuyu of the obvious fact that circumcision of girls was unnecessary. Despite the much publicised campaign against this practice, even today more than 70% of all

[4] Frantz Fanon, *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* (tr. Chevalier, 1965), p. 35.

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> Kikuyu girls are circumcised. The then Colonial Government attempted to carry out this advice and I remember that as late as 1957, circumcised girls were not admitted in the then intermediate schools. However, as we all know, there must have existed many loopholes as Kikuyu women are among the best educated in this part of Africa.

Njau also discussed the impact of Westernism on Indians and Pakistanis. To some extent he echoes the view of John Plamenatz, that the Indians are perhaps the most deeply "Westernised" of all non-Western peoples.[5]

But Njau notes: "Indians and Pakistanis have been acquainted with the Western civilisation for centuries, yet they proudly use their traditional dress."

A governmental policy that the Masai should become more Westernised in their dress, when pursued in a nationalistic country like Tanzania, had historical as well as cultural anomalies. President Nyerere himself had once complained that in a certain period of colonial rule Africans themselves regarded it as a compliment rather than an insult to be called "Black Europeans." (Address to the Tanganyika National Assembly, 1962.)

IT IS INSTRUCTIVE TO COMPARE the Masai controversy with the agitation about mini-skirts in Tanzania. In October 1968 some girls wearing mini-skirts were manhandled by members of the TANU Youth League in Dar-es-Salaam. Riot police had to be called in to handle the youths. A resolution was proposed to ban mini-skirts, wigs, and tight trousers from Tanzania with effect from January next year; but younger members of the ruling party thought January was too far away and embarked on measures to speed up the change. The Afro-Shirazi Youth League in Zanzibar soon endorsed the move by their fraternal organisation on the mainland. In a resolution marking the close of a three-day seminar the Afro-Shirazi Youth League pledged that it would work resolutely to eliminate such remnants of foreign culture in the country. The whole tone of these resolutions was in the spirit of Kariakoo Market Place, where youthful gangs assaulted girls wearing mini-skirts and tight dresses, and riot police carrying guns and tear gas dispersed huge Dar-es-Salaam crowds. . . .[6]

Clearly, Tanzanian disapproval of the semi-nakedness of the Masai has a different basis from its disapproval of the semi-nakedness of mini-skirts. In the case of the mini-skirts part of the hostility stems from the allegation that this was "a disreputable foreign intrusion into the dress culture of the country." On the other hand, wasn't getting the Masai to wear trousers an imposition on them of a foreign mode of attire?

African poets have on occasion satirised the so-called black *evolué* or *assimilé* who had absorbed too readily the trappings of the conquering nation. In the lines of a Senegalese poet,

> *My brother you flash your teeth in response to every hyprocrisy*
> *My brother with gold-rimmed glasses*
> *You give your master a blue-eyed faithful look*
> *My poor brother in immaculate evening dress*
> *Screaming and whispering and pleading in the parlours of condescension.*[7]

But what ought to be borne in mind is that nakedness, while revealing the body of a man, may at the same time be disguising his identity. After all, when everyone strips they are reducing themselves to their basic commonalty. If a Yoruba woman and a Muganda were both dressed in their national apparel you would have a basis for distinguishing the Nigerian from the Ugandan. But were the two women to strip themselves of their badge of nationality, reducing themselves to their essential femininity, a stranger seeing them would know more about their personal bodies but less about their personal identities. The price of nakedness in this case is national obscurity.

In this regard one might say that both complete nakedness and Western dress are having the same total effect on the problem of identity. The spread of Western dress and its acceptance by peoples vastly differing in cultural background and historical origins does itself have this consequence of blurring distinctions

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[5] John Plamenatz, *On Alien Rule and Self-Government* (1960).

[6] See *The Nationalist* (Dar-es-Salaam) and *East African Standard* (Nairobi), 8 and 9 October 1968. For a discussion of the politics of mini-skirts, see my article on "Mini-skirts and Political Puritanism," in *Africa Report* (Washington, D.C.), October 1968. A related instance of Tanzania's political puritanism is the country's decision to abolish the beauty contest for Miss Tanzania.

[7] David Diop, "The Renegade," in *Modern Poetry from Africa* (ed. Moore & Beier, 1963), p. 57.

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between peoples. A Nigerian man in a suit and a Ugandan in a suit might be as difficult to differentiate nationally as the naked Yoruba and Muganda women. Identity as the ultimate basis of distinctiveness therefore stands to suffer whether Africa moves in the direction of total Westernisation in dress or in the direction of total sartorial renunciation.

Yet the Masai retains a feature of distinctiveness by falling short of complete nakedness. The *Shuka* with which he covers part of his body, and the ochre with which he colours his body, together constitute a persistent claim to cultural uniqueness. What is the acquisition of trousers by the Masai but a step away from this uniqueness?

Nudity & Religious Rebellion

IN THE COURSE of the press debate on Tanzania's policy about clothing the Masai, the Masai elders in Kenya were reported to have asked the following question:

> If the Almighty God could stomach seeing the entire anatomies of Adam and Eve in their complete nudity, is it not a little prudish for an African government to have fits by merely viewing a casually exhibited Masai buttock?[8]

In reply a correspondent writing for an East African magazine said,

> It should be remembered that the Masai are not living before the fall of mankind as Adam and Eve did. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they were clothed by God before He drove them out of the Garden.

These remarks immediately dramatised the long-standing link between nakedness and certain forms of rebellion. The link does indeed go back to Adam and Eve and their own act of disobedience to God, which was itself connected with a prior act of rebellion by Satan. Milton in *Paradise Lost* begins by first presenting Satan and his followers as rebels against divine absolutism—believing as they did that it was "better to reign in hell than serve in Heaven." In Miltonic terms, this was the first political rebellion; but it was a rebellion of angels, who were then deported.

What could the fallen angels now do in revenge against God's punishment? The Miltonic version was that Satan and his followers decided to get their own back by perverting God's purposes for man. Satan makes the great journey towards the Garden of Eden intent on this ultimate subversion. Adam and Eve were striking pieces of creation, in whose very nakedness lay the glory of their innocence:

> *God-like erect, with native honour clad*
> *In naked majesty seemed lords of all,*
> *And worthy seemed, for in their looks divine*
> *The image of their glorious Maker shone....*
> *Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;*
> *Then was not guilty shame; dishonest shame*
> *Of nature's work, honour dishonourable,*
> *Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind*
> *With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,*
> *And banished from man's life his happiest life,*
> *Simplicity and spotless innocence.*
>
> (Book IV, 288–318)

Obviously this was the time of human evolution when nakedness was not a symbol of sensuous desire, but of innocence:

> *So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight*
> *Of God or angel, for they thought no ill....*

There are, of course, theological difficulties as to the nature of the Original Sin—was the Tree of Knowledge in fact carnal knowledge? Did Adam and Eve take a step towards sinfulness when they became conscious of their nakedness? Was it with Original Sin that death came to mankind?

If this interpretation is correct, if the forbidden fruit was indeed love-making, there is perhaps a touch of mystery that Christianity should regard this original capitulation to lust as the cause of all human death. In some sense it would seem to me more plausible to argue that the moment of lust between Adam and Eve was the guarantee of all human reproduction. It might even be argued that to a certain extent it is sin which makes us *human*—just as it is death which completes our definition as mortals. A human being who is not a mortal is a contradiction in terms. And it was Adam's sin which created human mortality.

BUT THERE ARE OTHER social implications of sin. In political philosophy, government itself has sometimes been interpreted as the political equivalent of dress. There was once a political Garden ("paradise") where men lived happily in innocent abandon and naturalness. But this political Eden came to be lost in terms compar-

[8] *The Reporter* (Nairobi), 23 February 1968, p. 4.

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able to the loss of the personal Eden where Adam and Eve experienced a moment of intimacy. As Thomas Paine puts it, "Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence. . . ."

Sometimes political philosophy and theology have merged in this equation. To Augustine, the "earthly city" (in the sense of secular government) became necessary when man proved his capacity for lawlessness by disobeying God himself. In a way the first godly city was the Garden of Eden—though it consisted of the most primary of all societies, man and mate. But Augustine carries the argument further. He not only says that it was sin which made government necessary. This is implied in the trend of his argument, but his more specific formulation is on the relationship between sin and servitude: "Sin, therefore, is the mother of servitude, and first cause of man's subjection to man."

The worst form of servitude, however, is servitude to sin itself. Augustine views subjection to evil as being worse than any form of slavery to man: "It is a happier servitude to serve man than lust. . . . He that is good is free, though he be a slave, and he that is evil, a slave though he be king." (*Civitas Dei*, IV.)

With the coming of lust to human life nudity ceased to be a pure symbol of innocence and began to acquire all the connotations of bodily temptation. As that correspondent in an East African magazine put it: "When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they were clothed by God before he drove them out of the Garden. . . ." The very concept of "flesh" came to imply sensuousness; and the very idea of "the flesh is weak" connoted the frailty of human discipline.

And yet Christian theology, while rejecting some of the more literal forms of body symbolism, nevertheless used a good deal of metaphor based on flesh as something sacred. The relationship between Christ and the Church is sometimes portrayed in decisively sensuous terms: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her" (*Ephesians* 5:25), or "Husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of His body." (*Ephesians* 5:28–33.) Such notions of the body and the flesh as characteristic of Christ's relation to the Church are recurrent in the language of Paul. In condemning prostitution, for example, Paul said to the Corinthians, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! . . . Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (I *Corinthians* 6:15–20).

But it was not merely in its original theological formulation that Christianity managed to establish a link between rebellion and the body. There were also other ways, including the very notion of naked pain inflicted on the body as a form of divine passion. In the case of Jesus himself the martyrdom, though self-willed, was not self-embraced. Jesus did not *revel* in the sentence which awaited him. In his trial before Pontius Pilate Jesus behaved on the basis of the dictum that discretion was the better part of valour. He gave guarded or ambiguous answers to many of the crucial questions posed. He would not admit to his message or to his position in clear unequivocal terms, but shrouded them all in the shadows of multiple meanings. "And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered and said, Thou sayest it" (*St. Luke* 23:3, 4).

To the extent then that Jesus was careful in what he said he was not rushing headlong towards his martyrdom. He seemed to be seeking a momentary defence behind a shield of ambiguity. And even when he was crucified there was still in him a sense of despair as he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Here again is a dignified reluctance to revel in affliction. But this dignity was not always present in the martyrdom of Christians later on. Some of the enthusiasm with which Christian martyrs later awaited their sentences of torture led to a spate of psycho-analytical speculation as to the ultimate motives for their behaviour.

As Theodore Reik has pointed out, the study of psychological and psycho-analyical literature suggests the widespread impression that religious martyrdom can be a form of sexual masochism. A host of references have been offered to prove that the sexual element may have unconsciously determined the psychic life of many Christian martyrs. Reik himself describes the equation as excessive. Such scholars were inade-

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quately sensitised to an important difference. To dramatise this difference Reik presents two typical attitudes towards sexuality which have a common starting-point. He cites the case of a 25-year-old man feeling a sexual excitement which he attempts to master. He does not succeed. Therefore he undresses, goes to his mirror, where he sees himself naked. He whips himself on his buttocks with a little dog whip until bloody weals appear—while constantly looking into the glass over his own shoulder. During this the sexual excitement increases until finally ejaculation occurs. The sight of his own blood is the signal for orgasm.

For his other example Reik cites a Catholic legend which illustrates the counterpart of this conduct. One of the kindest of all Christian Saints passed many years of his manhood in sacred contemplation in the Chapel next to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi. One day he felt an intense and almost overpowering sexual desire. Reik continues:

> It was winter at its hardest; Nature seemed asleep under the snow that covered the little garden of the monastery, but the Evil One was awake. When St. Francis was tortured by this thorn in his flesh so that he was in danger of succumbing to the temptation, he rushed into the snow and rolled himself in a thorn bush of wild roses. And then and there a miracle happened and the dew of his blood made the green sprout and in the snow roses blossomed whose petals were sprinkled blood-red. Up to this day the nuns of Assisi sell pressed roses the white petals of which bear the stigmata of the Saint in memory of his victory over the impure spirit.[9]

This psycho-analyst then proceeds to draw the distinctive features of each of these two cases. In the experience of the 25-year-old man in front of the mirror the pain constitutes an access to the otherwise forbidden satisfaction. In the experience of St. Francis the pain served as defence against the sinful desire. In the first case it means a promotion of the sensual excitement, in the second its counter-weight. Reik goes on to argue that both do approximately the same thing, but the meaning of each act is different as it is performed under different psychic conditions: "In the first case the affliction of severe punishment brings forth the enjoyment, in the second the self-punishment has to prevent gratification."

What matters from the point of view of analysis here is that both in masochism and in martyrdom the body provides the means to a higher plane of experience. Even the most spiritual of the martyrs needs the body as the foundation of his martyrdom. Would there have been a passion in the Crucifixion had Jesus not possessed a human body?

In Sunni Islam martyrdom is a peripheral phenomenon. There is little glorification of self-willed suffering, but in Shi'a Islam there is an important masochistic theme. For example, the murder of Hussein, the prophet's grandson, is celebrated every year by one Shi'ite School with wailing and a passionate beating of the chest. The Ithnasharis sometimes go to the extent of making their chests bleed in ferocious sympathy with the martyrdom of Hussein. Here again the body of the believer is needed to provide access to physical suffering.

In some of the more simple religious movements the body is used not so much to provide access to pain as to provide access to ecstasy. The dance that leads on to a trance and to spiritual elevation becomes part of a total religious experience. R. R. Marett has even gone so far as to assert that primitive religion is "not so much thought out as danced out."[10]

African writers have often used the symbol of the African dance and the response to the drum as intimations of the ancestral spirit of Africa. In the words of David Diop:

> *Negress my warm rumour of Africa*
> *My land of mystery and my fruit of reason*
> *You are the dance by the naked joy of your smile*
> *By the offering of your breasts and secret powers*
> *You are the dance by the golden tales of marriage nights*
> *By new tempos and more secular rhythms....*
> *You are the idea of All and the voice of the Ancient*
> *Gravely rocketed against our fears*
> *You are the Word which explodes*
> *In showers of light upon the shores of oblivion.*

And Senghor has sometimes sung about "the leader of the dance [making] fast his vigour to the prow of his sex."

The half-naked body, bleeding in places, has at times symbolised the agony of martyrdom in Christian history. The half-naked body,

[9] Theodore Reik, *Masochism in Sex and Society* (tr. Beigel & Kurth, 1962, pp. 349–50). For a discussion of related issues, see Mazrui, "Sacred Suicide," *Transition*, No. 21, 1965.

[10] R. R. Marett, *Threshold of Religion* (1909), p. xxxi. See also B. G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (1961), p. 198.

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sweating in places, has at times symbolised the ecstasy of a religious trance in the history of African rhythmic experience.

Nudity & Political Rebellion

IT IS NOT simply in the religious sphere that the issue of nakedness and dress has been interlinked with problems of rebellion and assertion. The realm of politics has, I have suggested, also sensed the relevance of apparel for human sensibilities.

1. Political rebellion can sometimes take the form simply of an obstinate refusal to change. To some extent this theme was discerned quite early in the attitude of the Masai when the new Tanzanian policy on their attire was proclaimed. One member of the tribe wrote an article to a Dar-es-Salaam newspaper pointing out that the policy was having the effect of forcing the tribe in the remoter places back into itself. The tribe had become more defensive than ever. The members that lived nearer the towns, and who had to establish contact with the towns, might feel the brunt of coercion and make concessions to it. But others who might at one time have been tempted to seek greater social intercourse with the urban areas might now be forced to reject those areas more completely.

> These people have resolved to ignore any force that is out to destroy their traditional outlook whatever the cost might be. . . . Since they value their traditions more than all those things they can get from the so-called "civilised" society they will do whatever they can to keep away from it. (*Sunday News*, Dar-es-Salaam, 25 Feb. 1968, p. 4).

If this then was the correct interpretation of the Masai response to the new policies in the days ahead, it constituted rebellion by withdrawal, a cultural assertion by a quiet defiance.

2. Another form of assertiveness is that of *residual* cultural distinctiveness. In this case a person may have been basically "de-culturated" away from his ancient civilisation, and might have adopted a new way of life in many respects, but then decides to retain a residue of this former cultural identity. This is the case of a highly Westernised African or Asian whose main literary interest is in Shakespeare, whose favourite composer is Beethoven, who eats with a knife and fork at home, uses a flush lavatory and has the rest of his house furnished in exquisite Western standards, but who nevertheless then decides to dress himself not in a suit but in the African or Oriental national garment. Pandit Nehru sometimes symbolised this form of assertion by residual cultural distinctiveness—permitting himself to be Indian by dress and by general sympathy, yet Western by the totality of his intellectual and even domestic behaviour.

This form of assertion can sometimes invite ridicule from critics. Gandhi's determination to move around simply with a *dhoti,* naked from the waist upwards, even when he was having an audience with British Royalty, was a striking case of cultural assertiveness. But it did provoke from Winston Churchill the taunt that India could not be entrusted to "a naked fakir."

Yet Indians have often been admired by nationalists elsewhere for their determination to retain at least these residual trappings of their ancient culture. Even in the course of the controversy over the Masai early in 1968 in East Africa that African correspondent whom I cited earlier had occasion to note the proud use of their traditional dress by Indians and Pakistanis although they had been familiar with Western civilisation for centuries.

3. A third type of cultural assertion is that of ritualised rejection of a foreign dress that had already been adopted. This is somewhat different from the former case since in that former case the residual trapping may never have been adopted. Moreover, in the case of ritualised rejection of Western dress, for example, the rejection may be only on special occasions or in the course of political demonstrations. The rest of the time the nationalists might still go about in their neckties.

The ritualised rejection of Western dress of this kind has been known to happen in the history of Kenya's nationalism. Eliud Mathu, the first African member of the Kenya Legislative Council in the colonial period, once tore his jacket off at a public meeting in a dramatic gesture of rejecting Western civilisation—if the price was the loss of land for the African. "Take back your civilisation—and give back my land!"

In the course of the Mau Mau rebellion there were similar moments of ritualised rejection of Western dress. Perhaps even more interesting was the utilisation of nakedness as a method of adding solemnity to an oath. Josiah Kariuki tells us of the ritual which constituted the Mau Mau *Batuni* oath.

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> We sat down and Biniathi then told us to take all our clothes off except our trousers, and we stood patiently waiting to be called by him. I was called second after Kanyoi and there was no disobeying the summons. I took off my trousers and squatted facing Biniathi. He told me to take the thorax of the goat which had been skinned, to put my penis through a hole that had been made in it and to hold the rest of it in my left hand in front of me.

This was part of the ritual which culminated in this undertaking:

> *I speak the truth and vow before God*
> *And by this* BATUNI *oath of our movement*
> *Which is called the movement of fighting*
> *That if I am called on to kill for our soil*
> *If I am called on to shed my blood for it*
> *I shall obey....*
> *I speak the truth and vow before God*
> *That I shall never take away the woman of another man*
> *That I shall never walk with prostitutes*
> *That I shall never steal anything belonging to another person in the movement*
> *Nor shall I hate any other member for his actions*
> *And if I do any of these things*
> *May this oath kill me....*[11]

There was in this oath a commitment to fight the enemy, a commitment to collective solidarity among the "Mau Mau" fighters, and a commitment to frugality and self-denial, especially in the all too dangerous sensuous area of relations with women. But to give the whole *Batuni* oath the overpowering air of binding force, it was deemed necessary to strip the man who was taking it. Nudity in this case was the requisite atmosphere for ominous awe.

4. A fourth form of political assertiveness connected with dress is itself a form of imitation. In some of the previous cases what was being dramatised was the rejection of a blind imitation of Western ways, but under this other category there is an imitation not necessarily of Westerners, but of those who have already come to symbolise a prior anti-Westernism. The adoption of Chinese attire among revolutionaries in countries like Tanzania is one case of revolutionary imitativeness. The Chinese style of dress becomes a symbol of solidarity worthy of adoption by African radicals as well.

Perhaps even more dramatic was the case of Cuban styles of attire as manifested among revolutionaries on the island of Zanzibar. Soon after the revolution which overthrew the Sultan's régime in January 1964 there was a widely publicised report that Cuban militiamen were among the revolutionaries. But Michael Lofchie's theory about the source of the confusion is persuasive. It is probable that the Cuban rumour was due to the presence of several trade union leaders who had joined the revolutionaries early on the first day of the New Era. As Lofchie points out:

> Many members of these groups had adopted the Cuban style of dress and appearance, and even employed the Cuban cry *"Venceremos"* (We shall conquer) as a political symbol. Their Cuban type of uniform set them off clearly from the [Afro-Shirazi Youth League] members and was probably the basis of the report that the revolutionary army contained Cuban soldiers.[12]

In this case imitation of the dress of others, far from being a detraction from nationalism, was in fact an ally of it. "For the apparel proclaims the man," Polonius had said; and Zanzibaris in Cuban apparel proclaimed their revolutionary affiliations.

5. The fifth form of revolutionary assertion in politics, in so far as it is connected with the issue of dress and nakedness, comes as a response to the indignity of being compulsorily undressed or reclothed by a conquering power. The conqueror lays down the law about a new mode of dress or against an old item of attire. The nationalist then responds to this with the militancy of offended pride.

A striking example of this kind of phenomenon in revolutionary Africa was the veil in Algeria. Frantz Fanon once tried to analyse the symbol of "Algeria unveiled." Fanon saw the veil of the Algerian woman both as a badge of identity and as a basis of solidarity:

> In the Arab Maghreb, the veil belongs to the clothing traditions of the Tunisian, Algerian, Moroccan and Libyan national societies. For the tourist and the foreigner, the veil demarcates both Algerian society and its feminine component.... The woman seen in her white veil unifies the perception that one has of Algerian feminine society. Obviously what we have here is a uniform which tolerates no modification, nor variant.

Fanon goes on to discuss the policy of the French authorities in its attempt to eliminate the veil from Algerian society. The French formula was "Let's win over the women, and the rest will follow." It was assumed that beneath

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[11] Josiah Mwangi Kariuki, *"Mau Mau" Detainee* (1963), pp. 29–30.

[12] Michael F. Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution* (1965), p. 276.

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the patrilineal pattern of Algerian society there was a matrilineal essence.

The success of the French assimilation policy, therefore, depended in part on an adequate awareness of the importance of the Algerian mother, the Algerian grandmother, the aunt and the "old woman." The colonial administration was, according to Fanon, convinced of this doctrine:

> If we want to destroy the structure of the Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight.

But in the heat of the Algerian War, it was not simple propaganda that was used. The ocupying forces resorted at times to the personal aggression of forceful unveiling of women in the streets. The situation got worse when Algerian women became more systematically committed to revolution. They were unveiled in the streets partly out of the French soldiers' desire to subject the Arab woman to indignity, but also at times out of suspicion that behind the veil was a Sten-gun. Fanon discerned in European behaviour deeper psychological reasons as well. He had himself served as a medical psycho-analyst in Algeria and had treated both French soldiers and some prisoners of the Algerian War. Fanon notes: "The rape of the Algerian woman in the dream of the European is always preceded by a rending of the veil." The French soldiers were sometimes influenced by a rape complex at the sub-conscious level, if not in complete awareness.

> Unveiling this woman is revealing her beauty; it is bearing her secret, breaking her resistance, making her available for adventure. Hiding the face is also disguising a secret; it is also creating a world of mystery, of the hidden. In a confused way, the European experiences his relation with the Algerian woman at a highly complex level. There is in it the will to bring this woman within his reach, to make her a possible object of possession.

But in fact this was the time when the Algerian woman converted the veil more fully into a military camouflage. A technique was evolved of carrying a rather heavy object dangerous to handle under the veil, and still give the impression of having one's hands free, of there being nothing under this *haik* except a poor woman or an insignificant young girl. It was not enough to be veiled. One had to look so much like a "fatma" that the soldier would be convinced that this woman was quite harmless. Fanon goes on to say that this technique was in fact extremely difficult.

> Three metres ahead of you the police challenge a veiled woman who does not look particularly suspect. From the anguished expression of the unit leader you have guessed that she is carrying a bomb, or a sack of grenades, bound to her body by a whole system of strings and straps. For the hands must be free, exhibited bare, humbly and abjectly presented to the soldiers so that they will look no further.

But with the conversion of the veil into a military camouflage the enemy gradually became alerted.

> In the streets one witnessed what became a commonplace spectacle of Algerian women glued to the wall, on whose bodies the famous magnetic detectors, the "frying pans" would be passed. Every veiled woman, every Algerian woman became suspect. There was no discrimination. This was the period during which men, women, children, the whole Algerian people, experienced at one and the same time their national vocation and the recasting of the new Algerian society.

But the Algerian woman sometimes *abandoned* the veil as an exercise in military masquerade. There were occasions when it was important that the feminine Algerian soldier should walk the streets looking as Europeanised as possible. For some of these girls it took a lot to escape the sense of awkwardness which came with the act of walking in the street unveiled. A newly unveiled feminine revolutionary "has an impression of being improperly dressed, even of being naked. She experiences a sense of incompleteness with great intensity. She has the anxious feeling that something is unfinished, and along with this a frightful sensation of disintegrating.... The Algerian woman who walks stark naked in the European city relearns her body, re-establishes it in a totally revolutionary fashion."

Fanon describes this as "a new dialectic of the body and of the world." The newly unveiled must overcome all timidity and awkwardness "for she must pass for a European."

In the case of the Zanzibari rebels in January 1964 the adoption of a foreign dress was an exercise in imitating admired revolutionaries elsewhere. The Zanzibaris embraced the Cuban style of attire. But in the case of the unveiled

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Algerian woman the idea was to embrace the French mode of attire and pass for a French woman. It will be seen that both exercises were in fact forms of revolutionary imitation. In the Zanzibari case it was an act of emulating comrades-in-arms on the international stage. In the case of the unveiled Algerian woman it was a case of imitating the enemy. Yet both remained acts of symbolic combat.

I HAVE TRIED to suggest in this article that dress and nakedness are factors in human existence which have had important connections with diverse forms of assertiveness and rebellion. The Tanzanian Government policy of trying to revolutionise the lives of the Masai by making them wear trousers falls into a long stream of human experience in which dress, culture, and social transformation have been intimately linked. Sometimes the act can be the same but the meaning may be different. A French attempt to abolish the veil in Algeria and the campaign by Kemal Ataturk to abolish the fez in Turkey do, at one level, appear to be comparable types of phenomena. And yet Ataturk's quest to abolish the fez (and the veil) in Turkey following the disintegration of the Ottoman empire was in a large measure an act of cultural defensiveness. It was the quest for the kind of modernised status which would make the new Turkey survive. But the French attempt to unveil Algeria was by contrast an exercise in cultural aggression, compounded in the Algerian War by considerations of military precautions and tactical subterfuge.

The place of dress and nakedness in relation to rebellion goes back, as we know, at least to Adam and Eve. In Christian mythology one long-term consequence of the Original Sin was the evolution of the concept of "private parts." Until then these were not private; it was the consciousness of their role in sensuality, and the attempt to cover this up, which gave rise to the aura of intimacy. In short, private parts became private when God sentenced Adam and Eve to eternal clothing. In the words once again of that East African correspondent in Nairobi, "It should be remembered that the Masai are not living before the fall of mankind. . . . When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they were clothed by God before he drove them out of the Garden."

Nudity and dress have political as well as theological implications. In Africa the political implications have sometimes touched the whole movement of *Négritude* as a glorification of African naturalness. The emotive sensibilities of African culture, and the glistening response of the African body to rhythm and to the demands of the ancestral dance, have all become relevant.

But there have been other manifestations of the political meaning of dress and nudity in Africa's experience, ranging from the Mau Mau *Batuni* oath taken naked before the thorax of a goat, to the adoption of a Chinese style of dress in Tanzania as an act of identification with Mao Tse-tung.

If "the apparel proclaims the man," so does the lack of apparel. The song of nationalism in Africa has sometimes included a vow of nudity; the trumpet of revolution has at other times awakened radicalism to its uniform; and the world of social issues has often had to touch the revealed parts of personal intimacy. The problem of the Masai in Tanzania today belongs to a whole universe of human experience. Here once again is one of the tense meeting points between the garment of culture and the body of man in history.

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Column

"By Modern Masters we mean the men who have changed and are changing the life and thought of our age. Everybody wants to know who they are and what they say, but hitherto it has often been very difficult to find out. This series makes it easy." And cheap too. The series of *Modern Masters*, to which these words by its general editor, Professor Frank Kermode, form a preamble is published by Fontana/Collins at the price of 5 or 6 shillings a volume. Five have already been published, and another five are promised in April, so that by the spring any of us can acquire, at the modest price of around £3, a complete simpleton's guide to the mystery men "who have changed and are changing the life and thought of our age."

This is surely enough to whet anybody's appetite, but anticipation becomes even keener when we are assured by Professor Kermode that not merely is the subject of each volume a Modern Master, but that "The authors are themselves masters." One feels as if one were being invited to some literary Master's Tournament in which every caddy can return a card well under par.

No wonder that Professor Kermode can assure us that "everybody wants to know who [these men] are" (strangely enough, they are all men; there are, so far at least, no Modern Mistresses). I must confess that I myself had not realised that at the moment the field was so rich that Fontana could so readily produce such a glittering array of talent. On the other hand, I am not quite sure that Professor Kermode has really fulfilled his promise. Contemplating the first five Masters offered to view, I am not really confident that Camus, Guevara, Lévi-Strauss, Marcuse and Frantz Fanon are the men who are shaping our lives and thoughts today. I would not refuse to Camus the admiration due to a great writer; but of the others one emerges as a tedious and unpleasing charlatan, one is dead under conditions of such failure that it is difficult to believe anyone will ever wish to imitate his example, and another is a fanatical apostle of violence in an age in which violence is precisely what we need least.

As for the subsidiary masters, so to speak, Conor Cruise O'Brien is a vigorous literary critic and his book on Camus is certainly the most interesting book so far published in this series, but I am not aware that otherwise he has done much to shape my life or my thought; Edmund Leach, on the strength of his Reith lectures, was widely taken to be something less than one of the clear lights of the day; Alasdair MacIntyre, Andrew Sinclair and David Caute have all written books of varying merit but I am sure that even they would hardly lay claim to the Master's degrees which Professor Kermode so generously distributes.

Alasdair MacIntyre indeed seems somewhat at odds with the whole purpose for which the series is presumably intended. His book on Marcuse has the effect of stripping his subject of any pretensions to mastery and is as efficient a piece of hatchet work on the body of his victim as one could possibly wish to have for five shillings. What Modern Master would like to be dismissed by another in such terms as these?

> The philosophy of the Young Hegelians, fragments of Marxism and revised chunks of Freud's metapsychology: out of these materials Marcuse has produced a theory that, like so many of its predecessors, invokes the great names of freedom and reason while betraying their substance at every important point.

In the subsequent volumes to be published in April we are promised studies of Chomsky (John Lyons), Freud (Richard Wollheim), Lukács (George Lichtheim), McLuhan (Jonathan Miller) and Wittgenstein (David Pears), and it rather looks as if, by the time Wittgenstein has been reached, the series will be running rather short of really "Modern" Masters (as subjects rather than authors, that is). No doubt there will be Chairman Mao still to come (Vanessa Redgrave?); and the late Ho; perhaps the Beatles? and ought not a place to be made somewhere for Malcolm Muggeridge? And after that, perhaps, the series could achieve a new lease of life by commissioning even younger masters to write on those who so far have appeared only in a subsidiary role and not in their own right. By such means the series could become, as it were, self-perpetuating, breeding its own crop of new masters; it would be interesting to see in 1980 which of them had maintained their ground and which had fallen by the wayside.

I offer these suggestions to Professor Kermode (who will surely be given a place in his own series) not in any carping or cantankerous spirit but because I am genuinely puzzled about the principles of selection he has adopted in his choice of subject for the first ten volumes of *Modern Masters*. What common quality, making them both Modern and Masters, can there be between, for instance, men of genuine and permanent intellectual achievement like Freud

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and Wittgenstein and philosophical mountebanks like Marcuse or romantic revolutionaries like Guevara whose contributions to thought or action have been minimal? And is there any case for claiming, as *Modern Masters* implicitly does, that despite the evident and enormous disparities of mind and feeling that divide a Wittgenstein from a Fanon, or a Marcuse from a Freud, there is some common ground between them that justifies us in regarding them all alike as "men who have changed and are changing the life and thought of our age"?

There are a number of different answers one might give to such questions. One, which I incline to favour, is that, despite everything which divides and differentiates them all, Professor Kermode's modern masters have something in common which makes their ideas for the moment fashionable, whether or not this has any relation to their real value and content, and whether or not it is the ideas themselves which are fashionable or, rather, some popular distortion of them. One would suppose indeed that it is the distortion rather than the original which is, in this respect, the operating factor and the presumed need for a series like *Modern Masters* might be taken as some evidence that this is in fact the case. For it seems clear that in some mysterious way fame, notoriety or influence has preceded any direct acquaintance with their work, either in thought or in action; for, as Professor Kermode says, "hitherto it has often been very difficult to find out" what they actually thought or did. Hence the necessity for a series which will "make it easy."

But again, whether it is in fact possible to "make it easy" to understand the genuine difficulties and complexities of thinkers like Freud or Wittgenstein in the same sense as it is possible to do so for a Guevara or a Fanon is another matter. In the one case, to make the rough places smooth is to strip their ideas of their essential quality and content; in the other, it is, more often, to give a specious appearance of rational discourse to utterances which are profoundly irrational and anti-rational. I have a feeling that in applying the same process of making things easy to both cases Professor Kermode may be, however unwillingly, contributing to a vulgarisation of ideas which necessarily destroys the very essence of the thoughts which it undertakes to make available to the multitude. I might as well promise to make *Principia Mathematica* easy.

There is however a rather different kind of answer which one might return to the questions I have suggested, even though it may have some relation to the first. It is that men who are Modern Masters have something which, over and above either the quality or the content of their thought, gives them the status which might be alternatively described as that of a prophet, sage, magus, guru or witch doctor; the kind of status indeed which, in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* Mr. Kurtz achieved in relation to his cannibal worshippers. This is a quality of personal leadership and influence, which cannot be attributed to anything particular which any of the Masters have actually said, thought or done. Some of them indeed have quite deliberately sought such a status; no one could really mistake the strident tones in which Professor Chomsky lays claim to a superior moral and ethical position from which he can denounce the corruption of the intellectual mandarins by whom, in his exposed and precarious position at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he is surrounded. No one could admire more than I do the facility with which Professor Chomsky reproduces the flawed but ringing tones of the False Prophet, and I look forward greatly to Mr. Lyons' book on this latest of Modern Masters.

There are others, however, who have had this position of modern guru thrust upon them. Freud's present apotheosis as a Modern Master was the product of a long, intricate and painful process by which he became both the head of a sect and an inspirer of those who were genuinely trying to investigate, by rational and scientific means, the labyrinthine mysteries of the human psyche. It seems to me that Professor Kermode, in his all-embracing welcome to everyone who is both a modern and a master, has missed a chance by failing to distinguish between those who, though all are joined together on the heights of his modern Olympus, have arrived there by very different paths.

THE EMERGENCE of the intellectual as guru is one of the most characteristic phenomena of our time, sometimes fascinating, sometimes absurd, and one cannot help feeling that there are some among those whom Professor Kermode has commissioned as contributors to his series who are quietly preparing a place for themselves in his modern pantheon when, by death, accident, change of fashion or total oblivion, others are forced to step down. One or two even seem to be slightly and uneasily aware that there is a kind of ambivalence in the means by which they make their heroes "easy" to us, as if, Andrew Langs of modern myths, they were re-writing fairy stories. Thus David Caute on Frantz Fanon: "no doubt it can be argued that Fanon and Guevara have been inflated into the exaggerated dimensions of charismatic idols." No doubt indeed that it can be so argued; but Mr. Caute takes the greatest possible care not to present the argument. Characteristically, he evades it by a flight into that Utopian world

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in which everything is explained by the corruption of that capitalist society in which Fanon had to pursue his destiny.

> In an overturned, humane world, a global society harmonised by abiding principles of equity and mutual respect among men, the mystique of the prophet would no longer be relevant. Karl Marx was "created" by capitalism; Garibaldi by Sicilian poverty; Lenin by the Russian autocracy; Gandhi by British imperialism. Fanon was created by the white man.

It really is rather hard to find that Fanon's virtues could only be appreciated in "an overturned, humane world," whatever that may mean, while his quite evident vices, his empty rhetoric, his literary love affair with blood letting, his primitive and brutal racialism, should be used as one more scourge with which to whip the world which gave him birth.

But if the role of the intellectual as guru and prophet, sage and magus, is characteristic of our times, so also is the almost insatiable demand that he should play such a part. There have been few periods in history in which claims to esoteric wisdom, based on personal intuition rather than on sober reason, have been so readily accepted and applauded. It is one of the greatest of contemporary paradoxes that such claims should flourish most at precisely the time when scientific reason, to which they are anathema, is celebrating its greatest triumphs, and that those who profess to the greatest faith in that particular type of reason should be least susceptible to its appeal. Or perhaps it is not a paradox at all, but simply the reverse side of a single medal. In any case, I have the feeling that the right title for Professor Kermode's series should have been, not *Modern Masters*, but *Modern Prophets: True and False.*

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I DO NOT THINK that David Jones is a Modern Master by Professor Kermode's standards, but I have a feeling that his poems and his paintings will continue to give delight long after anyone has ceased to worry whether he is "modern" or not. Perhaps I need not remind readers that T. S. Eliot considered his *In Parenthesis* a work of genius, while Auden has described *The Anathemata* as "very probably the finest long poem written in English in this century." *The Tribune's Visitation* (Fulcrum Press, cloth 28s., paper 12s.) is a much shorter poem, and like some earlier pieces of his, such as *The Wall* or *The Fatigue*, is concerned with the troops of the Roman garrison in Palestine in the earlier decades of the First Century A.D. The poem testifies once again to its author's extraordinary gifts and it adds to the other pleasures of the book that the lettering of the cover and the title page are of Mr. Jones' own beautiful design.

Another book which has recently given me great pleasure is the new edition of Jacques Barzun's *Berlioz and The Romantic Century* (Two vols: Columbia University Press, $25). It is now nearly twenty years since Professor Barzun's book was first published, but time has only increased its value, while in the same period Berlioz himself has increasingly grown in reputation, both as a musician and as a human being, in part, no doubt, because of Professor Barzun's book. The book and its subject have grown together.

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PROFESSOR CHOMSKY is, alas, nothing if not extreme. He now writes (Letters, p. 92) that my claim that he believes American foreign policy to be "the inevitable reflection of a 'senseless, irrational and predatory economy,' of a 'criminal society'" is "false," "absurd" and "complete fabrication." What is slightly absurd is the necessity of having to caution a professor of linguistics about the use of language. When Professor Chomsky says some claim is false and completely fabricated, what he really means to say is that although all the quotations from his writings are *true* and *completely authentic* (and so they are!), he doesn't quite agree with the interpretation. This is surely his sober right, and it might conceivably serve his polemical purposes better if he put his disagreement a little more soberly.

But this really is to indulge in the game of bandying texts which Professor Chomsky so despises. May I therefore recur to the starting point of our argument? I find it difficult to believe that anyone who has had the patience to read *American Power and the New Mandarins* (and it requires a good deal of patience) would quarrel with my conclusion that in Professor Chomsky's view American foreign policy is the product of an irresistible urge to world domination and that this urge accurately reflects the structure and character of American society.

Professor Chomsky urges this view so frequently and with such force that I really do not understand why he should trouble to deny it. Nor indeed does he really deny it; what he denies is that he expressed it in the exact words which I used, and this is hardly surprising. There are in his book, which is long, confused, and often not very coherent, passages which appear to be saying something rather different, though it is never clear what exactly that is; by quoting them in isolation it is easy for Professor Chomsky to give some plausibility to the claim that he has been misrepresented, even at the cost of falsifying the entire sense of his book.

The truth is that, on political subjects, Professor Chomsky is not a very good writer and it is always difficult to give a clear and exact meaning to what is itself badly expressed.

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Melvin J. Lasky

The Birth of a Metaphor

On the Origins of Utopia & Revolution

"...and there I saw some Words that were very cutting; bloody Words, which the Pilot told us sometimes returned to the Place from which they proceeded—but it was with their Throat cut; horrific words...." RABELAIS

"Wherever primitive man put up a word, he believed he had made a discovery. How utterly mistaken he really was! He had touched a problem, and while supposing he had solved it, he had created an obstacle to its solution. Now, with every new knowledge we stumble over flint-like and petrified words and, in so doing, break a leg sooner than a word." NIETZSCHE

"In its primitive uses, language functions as a link in concerted human activity, as a piece of human behaviour.... It is a mode of action and not an instrument of reflection...." MALINOWSKI

EN ROUTE to *les événements* of Paris in that May of 1968 I chanced to have an opportunity to listen to Herbert Marcuse who was presenting, to the thunderous applause of a European student audience, the following proposition: "Utopia is the *most real* of all *real* possibilities!..." Varying the spirit of the sentiment only a little (for he had been drinking at the fount of young Wagner rather than old Hegel), the celebrated contemporary German composer, Hans Werner Henze, offered the ineluctable corollary: "What the World needs today is not the making of Art nor the making of Music, but the making of Revolution—everywhere in the World...." Already in the *Quartier Latin* the utopians were raising barricades on behalf of dreams; and, shortly thereafter, as I stood at Marble Arch watching a *demo* of thousands of young English persons (some carrying placards which read: BE A REALIST, DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE) marching past the historic spot where the Tyburn martyrs waited for the end, the full-throated cry suddenly went up as in some primitive chant of a warring tribe: "REV-*oh*-LOO-*shun*, REV-*oh*-LOO-*shun*!..."

In Africa men were pledging themselves to be "loyal forever to the Revolution"; in Asia prison camps were crowded with "traitors to the Revolution"; in Latin America small guerrilla bands struggled on, strong in their faith that "a revolution could not be stopped... diverted... defeated," that like "a mighty storm ... fire... earthquake... flood" it would come to destroy so that revolutionary man with his utopian dream could come to renew, rebuild, redeem.

Meanwhile, back at the British Museum, my antiquated dictionaries and glossaries were still waiting for me: and the research I had been fitfully conducting on the origins of utopia and revolution seemed to be suggesting more insistently than ever before that, for the world's intellectual classes, in the beginning were always the words, that the slogans of ideology were part litany and part liturgy, and indeed that the modern Europeanised temperament was inconceivable without this special political vocabulary of enchanted volubility.

How has this come about, and why should it be so?

THE EARLIEST literal association of the ideas of Utopia and Revolution that I have been able to locate occurs in some mid-17th century verses of a poet named Robert Heath. He begins with

PREVIOUS ESSAYS *in this series were: "The Prometheans" (October 1968), "The Metaphysics of Doomsday" (January 1969), and "The Sweet Dream" (October 1969).*

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a few lines of doggerel about Copernicus' opinions, but he is clearly less concerned with the "Earth's Globe" and "Spherick motion" than with the social and political implications of the new "Delirium."

Nor doth the State alone on fortune's Wheeles
Run round; Alas, our Rock Religion reeles.
We have sailed so far the Antipodian way
That into darkness we have turn'd our day.
Amidst these turnings, 'tis some comfort yet,
Heaven doth not fly from us, though we from it.

Heath goes on, in lines that appear to have been widely quoted in his day:

When Noah's flood had turn'd the Land to Sea
And the Earth seem'd one floating Isle to be...
Yet true we find what was but Phansie then;
(For the world if we but understand the Men
that live therein;) For they alas turn round
...drunk with madness, with their poreblind eyes,
Think States well-settled; totter tho they rise.
A strange Vertigo or Delirium
O' the Brain it is, that thus possesses 'um;
Whilst like to fashions grown Orbicular
Kingdoms thus turned, and over-turned are;
Nothing but fine Utopian Worlds i' the Moon
Must be new form'd by Revolution.[1]

This was the warning to the world: utopia was revolution, revolution was utopia, and that was all that men needed to know.

In John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), the Angel admonishes Adam directly enough:

Be lowly wise...
Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there
Live, in what state, condition or degree.

Yet Adam's agreement is more apparent than real. He concedes the folly of "wandering thoughts and notions vain," but in effect preserves an opportunity for a dream of this world by exchanging abstract fancy for pragmatic hope, by descending from the "high pitch" to "a lower flight." What was objectionable was the idleness of philosophising (after all, it was the occupation of the devils in Hell, discoursing vainly "of good and evil... of happiness and final misery, passion and apathy, and glory and shame"); and he had no mind to abandon the imaginative adventurousness of human reason. "Our hearts are now more capacious," Milton writes in 1644, "our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things...." Milton was of Adam's party: and its vision was of "the highest that human capacity can soar to...." So there remained a commitment to good and happiness, to passion and glory, if only it were a practicable this-worldly proposition.

But apt the Mind or Fancie is to roave
Uncheck'd, and of her roaving is no end,
Till, warn'd, or by experience taught, she learne
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime Wisdom: what is more is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence....

It was in this sense that Milton drew a line between himself and the fictions of More and Bacon. He approved of all those political petitions offering advice on behalf of "new models of a commonwealth" (for "it is a deed of highest charitie to help undeceive the people"); he despaired of irrelevant fantasies. The task—and he put the distinction with force and clarity some two centuries before Marx and Engels—was not "to sequester out of the world into Atlantick and Eutopian polities, which can nere be drawn into use; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evill...." In yet another place Milton praises "that grave and noble invention which the greatest and sublimest wits in sundry ages, Plato in *Critias*, and our two famous countrymen, the one in his *Utopia*, the other in his *New Atlantis* chose... a mighty Continent wherein to display the largeness of their spirits by teaching this our world better and exacter things, then were yet known, or us'd...." (Something else again were those "petty prevaricators of America, the zanie of Columbus....")[2] In this our world, then, there were better things to come: a usable utopia which a "revolution of time" would bring.

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[1] Robert Heath, *Clarastella* (London, 1650), in John Booker, *Telescopium Aranicum* (1661), cited by Marjorie Nicolson, "English Almanacs and the 'New Astronomy,'" *Annals of Science* (1939), vol. IV, pp. 20–1. See also "Kepler, the *Somnium*, and John Donne," in Marjorie Nicolson, *Science and Imagination* (1956), ch. III and IV; and Christopher Hill, *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* (1965), p. 110.

[2] John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667), in *Works* (ed. Patterson), vol. II, pt. I (1931), Bk. VIII, 173–6, 188–99, Bk. II, 562–5, pp. xxx, 242. *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church* (1659), vol. II, pp. 44–5. *An Apology against a Pamphlet call'd a Modest Confutation* (1642), vol. III, pt. I, p. 294.

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This prescient foreshadowing of the modern conjunction of utopia and revolution is vividly suggested in Milton's brief account in his *Areopagitica* (1644) of his visit to Galileo and especially of his sojourn among those foreigners who counted an Englishman "happy to be born in such a place of *Philosophic* freedom, as they suppos'd England was...."

> There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought. And though I knew that England then was groaning loudest under the Prelaticall yoak, nevertheless I took it as a pledge of her future happiness, that other Nations were so persuaded of her liberty.

It is this absolute of future happiness which, as I shall later argue, is at the very heart of the modern revolutionary commitment; and for Milton it was indeed a pledge to "such a deliverance, as shall never be forgott'n by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish."[3]

The Faustian Future

As so often over all the centuries, the fine distinctions that utopians and revolutionaries tried to make among themselves were scarcely visible to the naked eye of the established opposition. Practical or fantastical, passionate or prudent, their dreams were deemed pernicious and their deeds most foul. Among Milton's Civil War antagonists, in this first generation of utopian revolutionism, they rushed to judgment and (as with poor Cinna) saw only that there was conspiracy in the poetry. In a sermon preached in Whitehall in 1628 by Bishop Joseph Hall—an accomplished stylist, known in his day as "our English Seneca," and famous, of course, as one of Milton's great polemical targets—there were lavish strictures against those who would "dream hence of an Utopical perfection...." He, and his Church, would have no part of either utopia or revolution.

> Hear this then, ye Violent Spirits, that think there can be no piety that is not cruel; the Church is a Dove: not a Glead, not a Vulture, not a Falcon, not an Eagle, not any Bird of Prey or Rapine. Who ever saw the foot of the Dove armed with griping talons? Who ever saw the beak of the Dove bloody? Who ever saw that innocent bird pluming of her spoil, and tyring upon bones?...
>
> Do you see any faction with knives in their hands, stained with massacres; with firebrands in their hands, ready to kindle the unjust stakes, yea woods of martyrdom; with pistols and poniards in their hands, ambitiously affecting a canonisation by the death of God's anointed; with matches in their hands, ready to give fire unto that powder, which shall blow up King, Prince, State, Church; with thunderbolts of censures, ready to strike down into hell whosoever refuses to receive novel opinions into the Articles of Faith? If ye find these dispositions and actions Dove-like, applaud them....

Oh, he was prepared to concede, "Liberty is a sweet word," and indeed "the thing itself is much sweeter...." But what had it in common with fire and blood and thunderbolts? It was a quiet and truly practical thing, free from the obsessions with either a golden past or a utopian future. Hall's is one of those voices on the eve of revolution whose eloquence waxes as their world wanes.

> There is a disloyal liberty of those rebellious spirits, which despise government, and hold it a servitude to live within the range of wholesome lawes; there is no freedom with these unquiet dispositions, but in the cold censures of authority, in the seditious calumniations of superiours, and in their own utopical prescriptions. Everything is good to these men save the present, and nothing save their own: though all these are not so much liberties, as licentiousness.[4]

The King himself, with less eloquence but even more urgency, denounced the "Cabalists" who "broached new Doctrine" and would "erect an upstart Authority without us." He argued against the Militia Bill which he contended was "but one Link of a great Chain, and but the first Round of that Ladder, by which Our Just, Ancient Regal Power is endeavour'd to be fetch'd down to the ground...." Appealing to Parliament (in 1642) to "declare against Tumults, and punish the Authors," Charles I was derisive about "some Persons who have now too great an Influence even upon both Houses, [who] judg or seem to judg for the publick Good, and as are agreable to that new

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[3] *Areopagitica* (1644), in *Works*, vol. IV, pp. 318, 329–30, 345.

[4] *The Works of Joseph Hall* (1837 ed.), vol. V, pp. 237–8. Joseph Hall, *The Shaking of the Olive-Tree: the Remaining Works of Joseph Hall* (1660), pp. 19–20. See, generally, T. F. Kinloch, *The Life and Works of Joseph Hall, 1574–1656* (1951).

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Utopia of Religion and Government into which they endeavour to transform this Kingdom. . . ."[5]

What joy there was soon to be for those defenders of Kings and Bishops when those dreamers of "Utopical perfection" began to encounter political difficulties in their efforts at the tumultuous transformation. In 1647 that bitter pamphleteer *Mercurius Anti-Pragmaticus* rejoices at the dramatic falling out between moderates and radicals, at the new hostility between *Pragmaticus* (his regular polemical enemy) and John Lilburne, and at the defeat of the "Adjutators." Now, he could gleefully retort, Colonel Harrison's regiment "having turned their refractorinesse into submissiveness and their disobedience into penitence, with the rest have promised a compliance and obedience in all things. . . ." What course, then, would be left for Lilburne and his militant confederates—"to guide them (no doubt) into the Land of Promise"? The critic is triumphantly contemptuous. "But John and they are alike to wander forty years, and to taste the bitter waters . . . ere they arrive in their Utopian Paradise." "And now," he concluded with satisfaction, "toles out the Bell . . . how is the mighty fallen!"[6]

BUT IF ONE UTOPIA perishes in the power struggles of a revolutionary situation, another utopia is born in the compensatory dreams of restoration. Before the emergence of a clear, simple concept of linear progress, both utopianism and revolutionism took their turns on the wheel of fortune, now turning left with the firebrands of novel opinions, now turning right with the return of traditional balance.

In a remarkable passage in Cowley's "Vision concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell" (1661), the poet of royalist sympathies allows himself to be effectively accused as "an Utopian Dreamer" who stood for nothing but the "Golden Mediocrities" of "the Supreme place attained to by Virtues that must not stir out of the middle. . . ." Up to this point Cowley had been relentlessly righteous in his indictment of the late Protector, or rather "the late man who made himself to be called Protecteur." The charges were hurled furiously against "our blest Reformer"—"Boldness . . . Brutishness . . . Rashness . . . Phrensie. . . . There is no name can come up to it, and therefore we must leave it without one." For England had in the Cromwellian tyranny been plunged into chaos, confusion, Babel and Bedlam.

> *Ah, happy Isle, how art thou chang'd and curst . . . !*
> *Art thou the Country which didst hate*
> *And mock the French Inconstancy?*
> *And have we, have we seen of late*
> *Less change of Habits there, than Government in thee?*
> *Unhappy Isle! . . .*

His conviction was absolute: "no man can justify or approve the Actions of Cromwell." And yet—

> Yet many there are, even honest and well-meaning People, who, without wading into any Depth of Consideration in the Matter, and are purely deceived by splendid Words, and the outward appearances of Vanity, are apt to admire him as a great and eminent Person; which is a Fallacy that extraordinary, and especially successful, Villainies impose upon the World.

Cowley conceded too much (and too volubly) to his visionary antagonist: "the general ground of your argumentation consists in this, that all men who are the effecters of extraordinary mutations in the world, must needs have extraordinary forces of Nature by which they are enabled to turn about, as they please, so great a Wheel. . . ." This was, he admitted, "a universal proposition, which seems so reasonable, and is so popular." But it was an inexcusable blindness to the true human and social disaster which accompanies "a total abolishment of the old"; and in a torrent of image, metaphor, and analogy Cowley tried to make this clear.

*1. **The Flood.*** There are "Spring-Tides of publick affairs," when the "Deluge" comes and there is a "break-up of the Flood-gates," even a malicious opening of "all the Sluces"—"and all the art then and industry of mankind is not sufficient to raise up Dikes and Ramparts against it."

*2. **Deviltry.*** "Boldness" he conceded to Cromwell, but "so far from being a sign of manly courage" he held it to be "only a Demonstration of Brutish Madness or Diabolical Possession."

*3. **Incendiarism.*** "But did Cromwell think, like Nero, to set the City on fire, onley that he

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[5] John Rushworth, *Historical Collections* (1692), vol. I, p. III, pp. 725–35.

[6] *Mercurius Anti-Pragmaticus, communicating Intelligence from all parts Touching Affairs, Designes, Humours, and Conditions, throughout the Kingdome* (Number 6, 18–25 November 1647), pp. 1–8.

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might have the honour of being founder of a new and more beautiful one? He could not have such a shadow of Virtue in his wickedness; he meant onley to rob more securely and more richly in midst of the combustion. . . ."

4. Destruction. "This man endeavoured to destroy the Building, before he could imagine in what manner, with what materials, by what workmen, or what Architect it was to be rebuilt. . . ."

5. Faustianism. ". . . since the *English* name was ever heard of, it never received so great and so infamous a blow as under the imprudent conduct of this unlucky *Faustus*."

Surely not political partisanship but only poetical ambiguity could have allowed the spirit in Cowley's dream who was assigned to defend the heroic Cromwell to score a point or two so trenchantly. "You pretend extremely," he is allowed to say, "to the old obsolete rules of Virtue and Conscience." To be sure, this was obsolescence with classical honour, and perhaps Cowley came equally well away when the contest is formulated by the Cromwellian as being one between "Aristotle's Politiques" and the practice of "Machiavil." In situations of powerlessness the militant political imagination is often generously permissive; it becomes large and embraces playful contradictions. Why else should the literary ideologue have portrayed himself as "a Pedant, and Platonical Statesman, a Theoretical Common-wealths-man, an Utopian Dreamer . . ."?[7]

For men of Cowley's persuasion, the Utopian dream was soon to find its fulfilment in the revolution of 1688. For men of Lilburne's hope, no year was to bring them closer to the Promised Land; for the idea of a special revolution all of their own to carry them forward to the Utopian paradise was still to be conceived.

Revolutionary Situations

WE HAVE BEEN moving towards this fanciful new imagery for at least a century now, and in a time when well-settled societies were tottering it seemed almost irrepressible. In the year 1571 the Bishop of Ross had written a curious letter to the English Duchess of Feria, and he hoped she would show it to the King of Spain: "The life of the Queen of Scots had been in great danger. . . . A revolution in her favour might easily have been effected if the King of Spain had raised a finger, but he had given no sign. . . . If the persecutions continued, the spirit of the Catholics would be broken, and a revolution would then be impossible. . . ." Again, the Spanish Ambassador in reporting to the King on the political crisis over Queen Elizabeth's possible marriage, noted: "The people in general seem to threaten revolution about it (*y en general toda la gente amenaza revolucion sobre esto*)." The usage of the term is approaching modern connotations, and it bears traces of both recent Machiavellian realism and older astrological fancy. Thus, in a similar Spanish report from a diplomat in London to the Duke of Alba, it was recorded:

> . . . For the last five or six nights a terrible comet of immense size has been seen in the sky, and as these people are fond of speculation, a great deal of discourse is taking place about it, the general talk being that such a sign has never been seen here excepting when it has presaged a change of government.[8]

The revolution that was meant was, for the most part (and one has to be wary of English translations of foreign documents![9]), still only the occasional celestial metaphor for a change in fortune or a circular return to "the original."

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[7] "A Discourse By way of Vision, Concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell" (1661), in Abraham Cowley, *Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses* (ed. Waller, 1906), pp. 342–76.

[8] The letter from the Bishop of Ross is in J. A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, vol. X (1870), p. 151. On the Bishop of Ross, see "John Leslie (1527–1591)," *Dictionary of National Biography* (ed. Lee, 1909), vol. XI, pp. 972–8, and D. M. Lockie, "The Political Career of the Bishop of Ross," *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* (1954), pp. 98–137.

The two Spanish reports are from the archives of Simancas, in *Calendar of Letters and State Papers relating to English Affairs*, vol. II: *Elizabeth, 1568–1579* (ed. Hume, 1894), pp. 449, 493. The Spanish quotation is from *Coleccion de Documentos inéditos para la Historia de España* (ed. Navarrete), vol. 91 (1888), p. 417.

[9] Thus, I now find in the original transcript of the Bishop of Ross' letter—which in Froude's rendering refers twice to "revolution" (see quotation above)—no trace of this usage. It is, once again, a case of misleading translation, for Froude was rather fond of "revolutionary" formulations. See his handwritten copy in James Anthony Froude, *Transcripts from the Archives at Simancas Relating to English Affairs, A.D. 1567-1575* (British Museum Add. Ms. 26,056 B, folio 166).

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All the pregnant images of the transitional conception of heavenly commotion with earthly disorders were brilliantly caught, as might be expected, by Shakespeare who, in a famous passage in *Lear* (I, ii, 107), describes in all but name what we have inescapably come to think of as a "revolutionary situation."

> These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourg'd by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father. . . .

This clearly echoes those contemporary news chronicles which reported "late and horrible obscurations, the frequent Ecclipsations of the fixed bodyes" and their dire consequences—"new Leagues, Traytrous Designements, Catching at Kingdomes, translation of Empyre, downefall of menn in Authoritye, aemulations, Ambition, Innovations, Factious Sects, Schisms and much disturbance and trobles in religion and matters of the Church, with many other thinges infallible in sequent such orbicall positions and Phaenomenes."[10] Even Copernicus, before proceeding to the elaborate tables of mathematical calculations in his *De revolutionibus*, allowed himself a fine introductory trope about how "the Earth conceives by the Sun, and becomes pregnant with an annual rebirth. . . ." From Copernicus to Kepler the association between earthly destiny and the "revolutionary" signs in the sky took on more dramatic significance as "new" and "unheard of" stars were discovered.[11]

[10] Shakespeare, *King Lear* (Arden ed., 1963), pp. xxi, 30, 252–3. Critics have suggested that Shakespeare is here also echoing notions in Florio's Montaigne where "the power and domination" of the stars ("not onely upon or lives, and condition of our fortune . . . but also over our dispositions and inclinations, our discourses and wils, which they rule") is propounded.

[11] At the same time as Kepler's famous study of the new star of 1604, *De stella nova* (Prague, 1606), another work was published and I cite its title as illustrative of the connection between "revolution" and current astronomical (and astrological) conceptions: Elias Molerius, *De sydere novo seu de nova stella quae ab 8 die Octobris anni domini 1604 inter astra Sagittarii videri coepit ac annuae revolutionis 1605 periodo proxima extincta avenuit enarratio apodeictica* (1606). Copernicus, *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium* (1543; tr. Dobson & Brodetsky, 1947), p. 19.

This astral feeling of political mysticism which linked local political events with universal signs only deepened in the next half-century, especially after the onset of the English Civil War. In one of his "treatises of the late Revolutions," James Howell—who was, in 1661, appointed to be the Historiographer Royal—observed that "the European world is all in pieces"; and he suspected that since "that direful Comet of the year 1618 appear'd in the heavens, some malevolent and angry ill-aspected star hath had the predominance ever since, and by its maligne influxes, made strange unusuall impressions upon the humors of subjects, by inciting them to such insurrections, revolts, and tumults. . . ." This was, in so ambitious and learned a writer as James Howell, less political astrology than political astronomy. In his application for the post of "Historiographer Generall," he had outlined the intellectual promise of probing to "the depths of things":

> 1. This minister is presumed to be an Artist this way, who will disdain to make of his History a meer Diary, by huddling together a confused heap of Materialls, but will take pains to polish and reare them up to a Structure with all its due proportions.
> 2. One who will observe the method of providence in the dispensation of his judgments, making researches into the causes of them which seldom com together, but many yeers & sometimes a whole Century with a long train of contingencies intervene twixt the Judgment & the Cause. . . .

His researches, then, and the long view of the causes of what he referred to as "strange shocks and revolutions," led him to this persuasion:

> . . . That the Astronomers, who lay sentinel to watch the motion and aspect of that Comet, observ'd that the tail of it having pointed at diverse Climats, at last it seem'd to look directly on these North-west Islands, in which posture it spent itselfe, and so extinguished; as if thereby it meant to tell the world, that these Islands should be the Stage whereupon the last act of the Tragedie should be play'd.

Whether old astrology or new astronomy, from Copernicus to Cromwell the path of revolution was charted in the skies. The tragic fault may have been in the stars, but not exclusively so; Howell was too bitterly involved in mundane politics not to allow in the "Structure" of his analysis for revolutionary men and movements. Indeed his familiarity with Italian events—and his sensitivity to words as a pioneering lexico-

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grapher—led him to one of the earliest associations of the word revolution with the dramatic meaning of "a change of Masters."[12]

We have already seen evidence that the strange new sounds of the turbulent Mediterranean vocabulary, especially Bruno's heroic and enthusiastic *revoluzione* of the spirit, had its echoes in the Elizabethan mind, *e.g.*, Fulke Greville's "Why are my revolutions strange . . ." (1609) and, again, in the lines of his sonnet:

> *When all this All doth pass from age to age,*
> *And revolution in a circle turn,*
> *Then heavenly justice doth appear like rage,*
> *The caves do roar, the very seas do burn,*
> *Glory grows dark, the sun becomes a night,*
> *And makes this great world feel a greater might.*[13]

Throughout the literature of this period a new word—and thing—hovers tantalisingly on the edge of modernity.

From Old Astrology to New Politics

IF THE LANGUAGE of men like John Florio, James Howell, and Samuel Hartlib who all enjoyed more direct contact with continental formulations began to touch on something new and different, the usage of "revolution" in Shakespeare reflects older meanings. There are four references in Shakespearean texts and, with one possible (but unlikely) exception, they are un-political and have to do, generally, with the wheels of fortune, changes in circumstance, and related celestial implications.

ANTONY: *. . . the present pleasure,*
By revolution lowering, does become
The opposite of itself.
[*Antony and Cleopatra I, 2, 126–9*]

HAMLET: *. . . here's fine revolution an we had the trick to see't!*
[*Hamlet, V, 1, 88–9*]

HOLOFERNES: This is a gift that I have, simple, simple; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes, objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions. . . .
[*Love's Labour's Lost, IV, 2, 66–8*]

KING: *O God! that one might read the book of fate,*
And see the revolution of the times
Make mountains level, and the continent,
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
In the sea! . . .
[*Henry IV, Pt. II, III, 1, 45–9*]

The word is only just beginning to take on new shape, idea and motion, even an "extravagant spirit." A writer in 1655 adds the word "revolution" to an appended glossary in order to help "the explication of some words not familiarly used."[14] But no 17th-century dictionary of exclusively English usage which I have consulted even hints at the connotations to come. Only in the 18th century do lexicographers, late as always, begin to record its political suggestiveness and then, mostly, in specifically historical terms of "the great Turn of Affairs after the Abdication of King James, and the Admission of King William and Queen Mary. . . ."[15]

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[12] James Howell, *Twelve Several Treatises of the Late Revolutions in these Three Kingdomes: Deducting the Causes thereof from Their Originals* (1661), pp. 4–7, 320, 409. James Howell, *Epistolae Ho-Elianae: The Familiar Letters* (ed. Jacobs, 1892), vol. II, p. 687.

[13] *Poems of Greville* (ed. Bullogh, 1939), vol. II, p. 105; *Caelica* (ed. Ellis-Fermor, 1936), p. 80.

[14] William Bagwell, *The Mystery of Astronomy, Made plain to the meanest Capacity, by an Arithmetical Description of the Terrestrial and Celestial Globes. Briefly shewing (by way of Question and Answer) the wonderful works of God, from the earth his footstool, to his Throne of heaven* (1655).

[15] Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabetical, contayning and teaching the true writing and understanding of hard usuall English words* (1613). John Bulloker, *An English Expositor* (1616). Henry Cockeram, *The English Dictionarie* (1623). Thomas Blount, *Glossographia, or a Dictonary Interpreting the Hard Words of Whatsoever Language, now used in our refined English Tongue* (1674). Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionarie* (1676). E. Phillips, *The New World of Words* (1696). N. Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum* (1730). Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). In Nathan Bailey's *New Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (rev. ed., 1772), the following is recorded:

> "*Revolution*, Fr. (revoluzione, It. revolucion, Sp., of revolutio, Lat.).
> 1. The act of rolling or turning round, rotation in general, returning motion.
> 2. (In politics) a great turn or change of government in a country or state.
> 3. (In geometry) the motion of any figure, round a fixed line, as an axis.
> 4. (In astronomy) the period of a star, planet, comet, or other phaenomenon; or its course from any of the zodiac points till it return to the same. . . ."

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When, in 1704, Clarendon's son dedicated the final volume of his father's formidable *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars* to the new Queen, he offered her "the benefit of reviewing all the failings in those times," for "now your majesty, who succeeds to a Revolution as well as a Restoration, has the advantage of a retrospect on all these accidents. . . ."[16]

The lines of the semantic emergence of the political image of revolution (a theme to which I shall return in the second part of this article) are foreshadowed again in two revealing references which I find in the miscellany of the Thomason collection of pamphlets, brochures, and broadsheets. The first is from the prefatory remarks by Samuel Hartlib to *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1651) in which he considers "the end and issue of this present Combustion and Continuance of Wars that are spread over the face of Europe" and promises nothing less than this as a result of prophetical analysis: "Farewel, (Well-meaning Reader!) and bee patient for a short time, thou shalt see the end of these distractions in great Revolutions both in Church and State, within and without Europe." The second is from an astrological calendar entitled *Now or Never* (1659), "wherein is Calculated and set forth The great Changes, Revolutions, and Turn of Times"; it called itself

> The Princely Dismal Calendar:
> Being
> *The Bloody Almanack*, For the Year
> of our Lord, 1660, Fore-telling the strange
> *Catastrophes, Changes*, and *Revolutions*,
> that will befall most Princes, States,
> and *Commonwealths* throughout
> Europe; And the *Superlative*
> *Actions*, designed by the *Heavens*,
> touching the *Crowns, Scepters*,
> and *Royal Diadems*.[17]

We are, therefore, for the first time literally in a revolutionary century. A new astronomy linked forces with a new politics; but, in the usual admixture which history forces upon the elements of change, there were also the old astrology, the ancient religiosity, and the immemorial human hope for renewal and redemption. The Civil War, as some historians of Cromwell's movement have wittily formulated it, was fought between rival schools of astronomy, "between Parliamentarian heliocentrists and royalist Ptolemaics" (and Ptolemy perished with Charles I). But it was also fought between competing schools of eschatology, between protagonists of the lost and future Eden and critics of (in Calvin's words) foolish Jewish fantasies.

INASMUCH AS THIS THEME of the so-called "Jewishness" of utopianism will be recurring again and again, it might be useful to record here that in Calvin's own context he was actually referring to the Anabaptists of his day: culpable utopians for "foolishly imagining that perfection which can never be found in the common fellowship of men" and even more dangerous revolutionaries for being "madde and barbarous men who furiously go about to overthrow this order. . . ." In his own last, French edition of the *Institutio* (1541), he spoke of *"les phantastiques"* (which has been modernised in the recent Geneva edition to *"les frenetiques"*). The association of this frenetic fantasy of perfection with some suspected Jewish predisposition occurs in the following passage which I cite from a 17th-century English translation of Calvin's Latin text:

> ". . . They thinke that nothing shall bee safe, unlesse the whole world be reformed into a new fashion. . . . That is a Jewish vanitie (*Quum ergo Iudaica illa sit vanitas*), to seek and inclose the kingdome of Christ under the elements of the world: let us rather (thinking, as the Scripture plainly teacheth, that it is a spirituall fruit which is gathered of the benefit of Christ) remember to keepe within the bonds thereof this whole libertie which is promised and offered us. . . .

As against the vociferous and boastful cries of "the phrenticke men that are delighted with unbridled licentiousnesse (*Sic quidem fanatici, quos delectat effrenis licentia vociferantur ac iactant*)," Calvin recommended an abstinent aloofness from troubled political affairs. For—except in special circumstances when an abused people manages to find legitimate authority to

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[16] Edward, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (1702–04; ed Macray, 1888), vol. I, p. xlvii. This edition includes the original prefaces by Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, to the first publication of the Clarendon manuscript. King Charles II's brother, James, had married Lord Chancellor Clarendon's daughter; both Queen Anne and the late Queen Mary were Hydes and thus the editor's nieces. This was "revolution from above," indeed!

[17] *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1651) and *Now or Never . . . A Bloody Almanack* (1659) are both in the British Museum's 17th-century collection (B.M. E.1260, E.999).

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champion its downtrodden cause—"the Magistrate cannot be resisted."

> . . . under this obedience I containe moderation, which private men ought to binde themselves to keep in cases touching the publike state, that they doe not of their owne head intermedle in publike business, or rashly breake into the office of the Magistrate, and enterprise nothing publikely. If any thing shall in a publike ordinance be behooved to bee amended, let not themselves raise uproares, nor put their hands to the doing of it. . .
>
> But if thou thereupon conclude, that obedience ought to be rendered to none but just Governours, thou art a foolish sinner . . . let us first call to minde the remembrance of our sinnes, which undoubtedly are chastised with such scourges of the Lord. Thereby our humility shall bridle our impatience.[18]

Another impatient generation of furious men, with its new fashion of world reform and its delighted promise of perfect liberty in common human fellowship, was not so easily dissuaded. England's enterprising, if self-appointed, Saints still had "great works" to do—"the planting of a new heaven and a new earth among us."

"Why may not we have our Heaven here," Winstanley asked, ". . . and Heaven hereafter too?" The teachings of Christ, "the greatest, first, and truest Leveller ever," were to be realised in the here and now. He who cruelly offered only the consolation of the hereafter was (in Winstanley's misquotations from Jude) "the filthy Dreamer, and the Cloud without rain. . . ." "Live not in darknesse any longer," Winstanley pleaded in his *Fire in the Bush,* "for the voyce is gone out, freedome, freedome, freedome. . . ." Yet it remained a providential liberation in which only Christ's coming would slay the Beast, destroy the Devil, and end all human oppression. In that "great battaile," he wrote, "Light fights against darkness, universall Love fights against selfish power, Life against death, True knowledge against imaginary thoughts. . . ." And the point of all "those pluckings up, shakings downe, tearing to pieces of all rule, power, and Authority" was to "bring mankinde back to that plaine hearted estate of simplicitie, in which the Devill found the man when he deceived him . . . the state of a little child." What could resist "the fire of pure Light" and the "unquenchable flame"? Winstanley's forecast was "woe, woe, woe to the imaginary power that rules the world; he shall be shaken with terror, and fall, and burst asunder." Governments would crumble and tyrants be overturned in the time of what he called "that great reformation, and restauration."[19]

A New Manner of Newness

THE FIRST GREAT revolution of the modern world was, as has been cleverly said by a young Marxist commentator (turning from a diet of Lenin and Trotsky to John Milton and John Knox), "a continuation of religious activity by military means."[20] Obviously we are not yet at the point where revolution is a continuation of utopian longing by violent means; it has yet to find for itself its own secular language and this-worldly imagery. If this profound emergence will prove to be, in one sense, a revolution of the new, it is also a clear and familiar historical admixture of continuity and change, of a break-through of innovation trailing clouds of tradition.

Exactly how new is "the new"? We must be especially cautious here, for the intellectual impressionism of generations of conventional historians has often perpetrated naïve myths about how an old order of stability, stagnating in ancient conceptions of cyclical non-change, gives way to a modern social dynamic, linked to progress and its related idea of a linear forward movement of mankind. This is both unsubtle and aberrant in its uncomplicated simplicity. Just as the concept of revolution could imply both circularity and forwardness, just so could the idea of progress and of the New manage to serve two masters. There was, after all, the immemorial path of Christian progress to the resurrection, as it transpired in the basic eschatological drama of sin and redemption, culminating with the final novelty of it all: a Paradise full of new creatures. Here, as throughout the story of utopia and revolution, one must never lose sight of the apocalyptic message in the book of *Revelation,* after the fiery day of wrath with its blood and thunder and great earthquake:

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[18] Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrétienne* (1541; ed. Lefranc, 1911), p. 753. *Institutio Christiane Religionis* (ed. 1846), p. 476. *The Institution of Christian Religion* (tr. Norton, 1634), Bk. IV, ch. 20, pp. 732–47.

[19] *Works of Gerrard Winstanley* (ed. Sabine, 1941), pp. 409, 447–80. *Complete Prose Works of John Milton,* vol. 4, p. I (ed. Wolfe, 1966), pp. 25–6.

[20] Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (1965), p. 110.

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"... And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.... And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new..." (*Rev.* 21: 1, 5). Here were the ingredients for a full sense of newness and futurity; and although the eschatological perspective was significantly different from the modern evolutionary conception of a secular process in time (rather than a sacred drama which would dissolve all historical time into eternity), still it was "future-oriented" and had this in common with subsequent teleological world-views. Long before the era of so-called secular progress, there was the transporting vision of a beckoning path forward, with all of mankind longing for the transforming event and ultimate climax, waiting for the divine end.

Historians, I suggest, have often failed to pay sufficient attention to the complexity of words, and to the structure of that complexity. It needs no Empson to discern the types of ambiguity that stare out at us from the relevant texts—for the meaning of "new" includes both the *old* New and the *new* New. Profound slogans are never simple coloured banners which devotees blindly follow; the armies may clash at night but they are never as ignorant as all that. Men are not often dialectical, but they are rarely as uncomplicated as some intellectual historians make them out to be. They are often capable, consciously or unconsciously, of making fine distinctions and even more ingenious combinations, and have throughout recorded experience demonstrated a capacity for keeping two contradictory or conflicting ideas in play at the same time. One scientist of the day reveals an understandable eagerness to reconcile old and new, and even in the title of his work there is the sign of his hesitation and doubling-back: *A New or, More Truly, a New-Ancient Explanation....*[21]

A glance at that unique repository of 17th-century notions, John Spencer's anthology of *Things, New and Old*—"or a Store-house of Similies, Sentences, Allegories, Apophthegms, Adagies, Apologies, Divine, Morall, Politicall, &c. with their severall Applications"—provides evidence enough of this dialectical ambivalence and contradictory potential. On the one hand, the breakthrough of newness, of innovation or what I have called the new New, is subversive of all true social and religious order; on the other hand, the old New is central to a faith in the transcendental meaning of the world. No one could have been stronger than Spencer in his reprobation of the "Affectation of Novelty." As he writes, with a mocking bitterness: "... Thus some are for this Preacher, some for that; such doctrine as is begot in Thunder, full of Faction and Innovation, if it smell not of novelty, it shall not concern them...." There was an explosive inconsistency here. The argumentation proceeded in a manner which was as learned as it was desperate, but divided against itself it could not stand; and the men of his persuasion saw the logic of their faith destroyed in their own lifetime. One of Spencer's apophthegms reads: "INNOVATIONS IN CHURCH OR STATE, VERY DANGEROUS." Yet another claims: "REGENERATION, THE EXCELLENCY THEREOF," for "without this *new* Creation, there is no *Freedom* from damnation, no happinesse to be obtained...." Nothing could have been more dangerously disorienting than the public effort to hold three obviously contradictory views at the same time—what was new was vicious; nothing was truly new but merely a version of the old; only the truly new could save.

"We look upon Guns and Printing as new inventions," Spencer observes sceptically, and begins a perfect circular argument:

> Yet for all this, it is said that the Chinese had the use both of Guns and Printing long before we in these Western parts had any notice of them. Why then should Christians so eagerly hunt after *Novelties*, when Solomon by the Spirit of God sends a peremptory challenge to all Mankind, *Is there any thing where of it may be said, this is new?* Let every one labour to get spiritual eyes, to behold the beauty of the *new Creature*, the bravery of the *new* Jerusalem, get into Christ that he may be a *new Creature*, and so he shall have a *new Name*, a *new Spirit*, *new Alliance*, *new attendance*, *new wayes*, and *new work*, *a new Commandment*, *a new way to Heaven* and new Mansions in heaven.

The headline to this passage enjoined "EVERY MAN TO LABOUR THAT HE MAY BE A NEW CREATURE," and this is soon followed by yet another: "DAILY AMENDMENT OF LIFE ENJOYNED TO THE MAKING UP OF THE NEW CREATURE." How could this ever have been felt to be invincible ground

[21] L. Savet, *Nova seu verius nova-antiqua de causis colorum sententia* (Paris, 1609), in Lynn Thorndike, "Newness and Craving for Novelty in 17th-Century Science and Medicine," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (October 1951), vol. XII, p. 598.

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on which to combat a rival and revolutionary conception of newness?

> ... For *old things* being put away, all things will become new; we shall be *new Men*, new *Creatures*, we shall have *new hearts*, and *new* songs in our mouthes, be made partakers of the *new* Covenant, and at last Inheritors of the *new Jerusalem*.

The more these articles of faith were reiterated, the more the weapons were being given to the hands of the enemy who could, and would, turn them the other way. We are confronted here with the spectacle of one of the great and fateful boomerangs in the history of European rhetoric; and in the end our traditional ideologist of *Things, New and Old* is left spluttering ineffectually in a final and hopeless round of irony, trying to prevent that which his apocalyptic doctrine had made possible.

> ... Thus it is with us, We are all for invention, and new devices of Sin, altogether unknown to the Ages of our Forefathers; *New* Lords, *new* Laws; *new* lights, *new* doctrines; *new* fashions, *new* faces; nay almost *new* kinds of Men or Women ... *new* devices for gain, *new* wayes of cheating, *new* wayes of breaking; So that without all doubt, God is devising some new manner of Judgment....[22]

No, what was being devised was a new historic manner of newness. There was a vivifying sense of Faustian boundlessness, and it was best symbolised by the graphic change in the coat-of-arms of the Spanish royal family from *Ne Plus Ultra*, depicting the Pillars of Hercules in the straits of Gibraltar, to *Plus Ultra*, with new ships passing through for the first time: for there was indeed "more beyond."[23] In the words of a Florentine humanist to the King of Portugal, praising the progressive triumphs of his own path-breaking era of secular adventure and exploration, this was a time of the "opening up [of] new lands, new seas, new worlds, even new constellations...."

NOTHING IS AS OLD as the longing for newness, and it is of its essence that it should itself always appear new, unique, and unprecedented. The recurrent passion for the new is the cry of the human animal spirit for rebirth, for energy, surprise and adventure; it reasserts historical man's deep need for a sense of differentness and otherness, and his heartfelt hope of fresh purpose and fulfilment. It is here, at this point of its great modern recurrence, that another primary concept joins three traditional forms of essential archetypes—to *resurrection, reincarnation*, and *redemption* comes *revolution*, with its related promise of a splendoured newness and another golden chance for mankind. It represents, with Utopia (and Paradise, or Nirvana, before it), one of the elementary forms of the intellectual life, experienced at the high-pitched transcendental level where the cosmic drama of imagined human destinies unfolds. The "Golden Age" was projected forward and Arcadia given temporal realism and topical relevance, as men of determined will, armed with knowledge and inflamed by benevolent moralities, tried to reshape this world into more perfect moulds.

Utopia was the revolutionary concept in the new realm of social aspiration. Revolution, even in the sense of Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* —"And why not admit that the appearance of daily revolution belongs to the heavens but the reality belongs to the Earth?"[24]—was a utopian glimpse of new worlds, new perspectives. Both began by shattering an existing given conception of this time and place with a new and hitherto inconceivable other world. Thomas More's Utopia on a far-away island and John Milton's revolutionary battle-cry for "a mutual bond of amity and brotherhood between man and man over all the world" would prove to be the twin stars of both the political and moral imagination of modern man. He could now imagine that (in Milton's phrase, as he put it in the title of his very last political pamphlet), there was always another *"readie and easie way."* One more revolution and the earth itself would turn, at long last, to that fine and newly form'd utopian world.

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[22] John Spencer, *Things, New and Old* (1658), pp. 313, 382, 453, 591, 611. Still, apparently, of some intellectual relevance two centuries later, this work was reprinted, in a modern two-volume edition, in 1867.

[23] P. B. Medawar, "On 'the Effecting of All Things Possible,'" *The Advancement of Science*, vol. 26 (1969), p. 2.

[24] "*... neque fateamur ipsius quotidianae revolutionis in caelo apparentiam esse, et in terra veritatem?*" Nicolaus Copernicus, *On the Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres* (tr. Wallis, 1952), p. 519; *Des Révolutions des Orbes Célestes* (tr. Koyré, 1934), p. 92. See, generally, Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution* (1957).

(*A concluding part of this article will be published in the next* ENCOUNTER)

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Jorge Luis Borges

To a Certain Ghost, 1940

England, may your sacred soil not be defiled
by the German boar and Italian hyena.
May you be saved, Shakespeare's island, by your sons
and daughters
and glorious ghosts.
Here, from far off shores
I summon them and they respond,
thronging out of the numberless past,
mitred and iron-crowned,
with Bibles, swords, and oars,
with anchors and bows.
In the black night, a time auspicious
for the arts of rhetoric and magic, they loom over me,
and I seek out the frailest, the most tenuous,
and say to him: O friend, again
the hostile continent prepares with arms
the invasion of your England,
as in those days that you endured and sang.
By sea and land and air the armies are converging.
Dream again, De Quincey.
Weave nightmare nets
as a bulwark for your island.
Let those who hate you wander without end
inside your labyrinths of time.
Let their night be measured by centuries, by eras,
by pyramids,
let their weapons dissolve to dust, their faces dust,
let us now be saved by the indecipherable structures
that filled your sleep with horror.
Brother of night, eater of opium,
father of winding sentences which already are mazes
and towers,
creator of unforgettable words—
do you hear me, unseen friend,
through these fathomless things:
the seas and death?

Translated from the Spanish
by Norman Thomas di Giovanni

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The Legacy of Georges Sorel

Marxism, Violence, Fascism — By J. L. TALMON

AT A TIME when words like violence, "direct action," "confrontation," "the bourgeois world," "cleansing," "total destruction," etc. are shouted into our ears with obsessive persistence, there is every justification for (and there may even be some intellectual profit in) taking another look at the most famous European apologist of violence—Georges Sorel. The more so, if one wishes to examine the view (which seems to be implied, for instance, in the title, "The Age of Violence," given to the last chapter of the concluding volume of the New Cambridge Modern History) that the terrorist totalitarian régimes of both Left and Right so characteristic of this century, should not be seen as two primary, self-sufficient, and all-embracing alternatives pitted against each other, but as two different versions of the same phenomenon, the urge for violence. And it is surely legitimate to go on asking whether the present wave of defiant and intransigent extremism should not also be classified as the latest variety thereof?

Georges Sorel lived long enough to see and to hail the Bolshevik Revolution as a great fulfilment, and long enough if not to congratulate Mussolini on the accomplished march on Rome, at least to express his fascinated interest in and keen admiration for rising Fascism. There is the story that in the same week, in the late 1920s, the Director of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris was approached by the Ambassadors of Soviet Russia and Fascist Italy, on behalf of their respective governments, with offers of sums of money for the repair of the tombstone on Georges Sorel's grave. True or apocryphal as the story may be, Sorel did utter shortly before his death the prayer to which adherents of either ideology could have responded with a fervent amen—"to be allowed, before descending into the grave, to see the humbling of the proud bourgeois democracies, today so cynically triumphant. . . ."[1]

If Benedetto Croce spoke of Georges Sorel as one of "the two sole original thinkers thrown up by socialism" (the other was Karl Marx), Wyndham Lewis, the grim hater of philistinism and ferocious kill-joy, and one of the first intellectuals in the West to hail Hitler with a special book, saw in Sorel "the key to all contemporary political thinking." Mussolini repeatedly acknowledged Sorel as his master: "What I am, I owe to Sorel."

And Sorel, in turn, called Mussolini "a man no less extraordinary than Lenin . . . of a greater reach than all the statesmen of the day . . . not a socialist *à la source bourgeoise*; he has never believed in parliamentary socialism."

Notwithstanding Lenin's dismissal of him as a muddle-head and a mischief-maker, Sorel described Lenin as the greatest theorist that socialism had had since Marx and a head of state whose genius recalls that of Peter the Great—in the effort of "orienting Russia towards the constitution of a republic of producers, capable of encompassing an economy as progressive as that of our capitalist democracies." Although he modestly stated that he "had no reason to suppose that Lenin may have accepted my ideas," Sorel was proudly sure that his "syndicalism was a slope inclining toward Bolshevism."[2]

In the light of these statements, one need not be startled by the opinion of the French Fascist, Ramon Fernandes, expressed in 1937, that *"Georges Sorel fut un inspirateur direct des régimes totalitaires."* Recent scholarship has been increasingly more inclined to focus attention

[1] Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la Violence* (4th edition, Paris, 1919), Appendix X 3, *"Plaidoyer pour Lenine,"* p. 454; *Reflections on Violence* (tr. Hulme & Roth, introduction by Edward Shils, 1950), "In Defense of Lenin," p. 311.

[2] *Réflexions*, pp. 442, 451. See also G. Sorel, *Lettres à Paul Delesalle, 1914–1921* (Paris, 1947), p. 234; Jean Variot, *Propos de G. Sorel* (Paris, 1935), p. 57; Gaëtan Piron, *Georges Sorel* (Paris, 1927), pp. 53, 55–6; James H. Meisel, *The Genesis of Georges Sorel* (1951), pp. 219, 226, 230.

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on that strange encounter just before 1914 between the ageing Sorel and some of his Syndicalist disciples on the one hand, and, on the other, a few youthful ultra-Rightist nationalists in France and Italy, as a kind of curtain raiser to post-1918 Fascism. And it is impossible not to be struck by similarities of thought and speech between the young New Left radicals of today and the author of the *Réflexions sur la violence* seventy years ago.

The Heroic Leap

SOREL WAS A SEEKER. His restless and easily discouraged quest, his tentative enthusiasms and bitter disillusionments epitomise the spiritual biography of his age, the pathetic pilgrimage of modern man who had lost the certainties and fixities of the early days. Sorel was fascinated by the legend of the Wandering Jew—"the symbol of the highest aspirations of mankind condemned to be forever marching, without knowing any repose." In his vehement rejection of the 18th century's facile and optimistic substitute for the religious Theodicea and in his revulsion from Bourgeois civilisation based on it, Sorel joins the ranks of the 19th century's great prophets of wrath—de Maistre, Carlyle, Schopenhauer, Burckhardt, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, among others.

Born in 1847 into a royalist bourgeois family in Normandy (he was a cousin of the historian Albert Sorel, author of the monumental work, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*), Georges Sorel was destined to take his first bearings in the world just as France was going through the ordeal of national defeat and civil war—the Commune—in 1870–71, and then to follow the anguished post-mortem to which such conservative thinkers as Taine, Renan, Le Play and others had submitted the history of France, making the Revolution of 1789 responsible for that zig-zag course of revolution, anarchy, terror, Bonapartist dictatorship and restoration, vast conquest and terrible defeat, the triumph of liberty and its demise. The arrival of the masses filled these writers with dread. As for the universal suffrage which the Third Republic —a pathetic caricature of the great Revolution— seemed to have enthroned forever, had it not in 1848 swept Louis Napoleon Bonaparte into power, and enabled him, as both the elect of the masses and the defender of bourgeois property against the Red Revolution, to strangle liberty? The vagaries of the blind multitude and its associated demagoguery could no longer be held in check by any of the proposed dams—a restored monarchy, religion, *"les autorités sociales."*

Nothing shows better the impact that this national self-questioning had on Sorel than his frequent reference to Ernest Renan's anguished question—"On what will the future generations live?" after the inherited Christian habits of thought and conservative inhibitions will have lost their grip completely (as they clearly were losing it all the time).

IT WAS IN ORDER to sort out to himself these bewildering things that the civil engineer (roads and bridges) left government service at the age of 45 and retired on a small pension with the ribbon of *Légion d'honneur*, into a Paris banlieue, to study, meditate and write. He frequented intellectual circles composed of very young men, mostly disciples on the Left Bank, attended regularly the lectures of Henri Bergson at the Collège de France, and worshipped the memory of his deceased (apparently illiterate) wife, who died childless in 1897. Sorel, incidentally, never tired of extolling chastity as the virtue of virtues, as the sign of moral health and social cohesion, and of stigmatising the lack of it as proof of sickness and degeneracy.

The very titles of his earliest books—*Contribution à l'étude profane de la Bible* (1889), *Le procès de Socrate* (1889), and *La fin du monde antique* (1898) — betray Sorel's preoccupation with the phenomena of integration and disintegration, decadence and rebirth. While the tract on the Bible is an attempt to bring into relief the naïvely heroic tone of the Biblical life stories, and their educational value as antidotes to utilitarianism and revolutionary ideology, *Procès de Socrate* is an essay on the free-wheeling intellectual who, by questioning and criticising the ways of men from an abstract stand, undermines the instinctive certainties, the massive traditions, the life-sustaining prejudices and the inherited institutional framework of the nation. Socrates stands condemned for arrogantly trying to replace the earthly, concrete, "social" reality of family by the abstract ideal of the "fictitious moral family," the organically and historically structured state with an essentially "ecclesiastic" conception of society, based on pure reason and spiritual values, and for inspiring moods of ecstatic and orgiastic intoxication that invite the imposition of both revolutionary and tyrannical solutions.[3]

La fin du monde antique is a study in disintegration and decline. The late Roman Empire has its strength, its very life, all the values and institutions which had made it great sapped by too much self-consciousness and by otherworldly spirituality. The victory of Christianity

[3] Michael Freund, *Georges Sorel: der revolutionäre Konservatismus* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1932), pp. 17, 34, 69; Georges Goriely, *Le pluralisme dramatique de Georges Sorel*, (Paris, 1962).

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had been prepared by the spread of Oriental cults and introspective philosophies which "sowed everywhere the seeds of despair and death," by putting personal salvation above country, family and social ties, holiness above law, poverty above the productive effort, renunciation above responsibility, contemplation above virile struggle, the heavenly fatherland above the city. *"Le moyen âge peut commencer; il n'y a plus de cité, plus de droit."* At a later date Sorel will portray early Christianity as the most powerful impulse towards spiritual and social rebirth in the midst of total decay. A naïve, narrow, but heroic message, it enabled its believers to lift themselves into the highlands of a strenuous, new beginning—the *ricorsi* of Vico. This juxtaposition of decomposition and reintegration, decadence and rebirth expresses Sorel's deepest and most abiding sentiments: his aggressive and overwhelming pessimism and his yearning for deliverance. "This pessimism is a metaphysic of ethics (*moeurs*) rather than a theory of the world." It stems from "the experimental knowledge which we have acquired of the obstacles which oppose the satisfaction of our imaginations" and from "the profound conviction of our natural weakness." The pessimist regards the prevailing social conditions as "constituting a system held together by an iron law (*loi d'airain*)," which must either be supported *en bloc* as something inevitable, or made to disappear "through a catastrophe carrying all with it." Do not therefore blame any particular persons for the evils that be, and do not engage in partial reforms.

In language very reminiscent of de Maistre, Schopenhauer, Burckhardt and Nietzsche, Sorel pours scorn upon all those who promised easy solutions and rapid improvement, and who proclaimed happiness as our right and pleasure as man's legitimate aim. Pain and suffering riveted us to life; its reality, dignity and depth; pleasure-seeking marked an escape from it, a gliding away from its inexorable determinations. Decadence fascinated Sorel, as, incidentally, it did so many philosophers of history and culture, from whom the extreme Right derived much of its inspiration. The natural tendency towards dissolution and decay was to him a universal law. Civilisation was a most precarious possession, and was being maintained by the skin of its teeth. Any sign of relenting was soon followed by rot, collapse and ruin. Barbarism was always creeping into the weak ramparts built against it. What gave meaning and grandeur to our life was the state of tension and unyielding struggle to ward off the forces of decay and destruction, and above all the yearning and striving for deliverance. This "deliverance" Sorel did not see in the ease of *détente* and the repose of relaxed muscles, or in Schopenhauer's loving communion with art in an all-dissolving Nirvana; or in Burckhardt's vision of a secular neo-monasticism as a refuge for the chosen few; he saw it rather in the spirit of Nietzsche, in the elation which came from tearing oneself out of the maze of snares and the miasma of feebleness: the heroic leap into a new and immensely strenuous discipline which had been resolutely chosen, without ever looking back or sideways—a monastic order, the early Puritan communities, the *Grande Armée*.

This faith—pessimism linked to a vision of deliverance—was a doctrine "without which nothing truly great has ever been accomplished in this world." This is clearly a religious frame of mind. Sorel was never a believer; he never used the word God; but he never ceased to be fascinated by religion and to write on religious problems. Sin and purification, guilt and redemption, self-willed arrogance and objective certainty, right and force, legitimacy and revolution—these speculations are at the source of his quest.[4]

The Revolt against Politics

By 1893–1894 Georges Sorel became a full-fledged Marxist. As he writes,

> I hold the theory of Marx for the greatest innovation introduced into philosophy for centuries.... All our ideas are bound today to congregate around the new principles posed by scientific socialism....The human spirit refuses to be content with old economic scepticism... with registering of facts, with reasoning about the balance of profits, with comparing the increase of prosperity in the various countries.[5]

The accent is clearly not upon the evils of capitalism or the sufferings of the poor, but upon objective certainty and impersonal necessity, in contrast to the "subjective personal and crude notions of a philosophy delivered to accident," emotional preferences or speculative conjecture. The Archimedean point of Marxist philosophy was according to Sorel the conception of man as "*tout entier comme travailleur*," never separated "from the instruments with which he earns his living," in other words the constant and intimate relationship betwen men and the machine; between the free and creative freedom of the worker as tool-maker, *homo faber*, manipulator of inert matter on the one hand and the inexorable determinations thrown back

[4] Richard D. Humphrey, *Georges Sorel, a Prophet without Honor: a study in anti-intellectualism* (1951).

[5] Georges Sorel, "*Science et socialisme*," in *Revue Philosophique* (1893), pp. 509–11.

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by the medium and the tools on the other. In comparison with this, the abstract ideologism of intellectuals and the would-be metaphysical external moral principles of philosophers represented vague conjectures, imaginings or emotional states. Sorel goes so far as to maintain that the great theoretical advances in science had in most cases been nothing but generalisations of technological inventions. This quest for certainty and abhorrence of arbitrariness and vagueness caused Sorel, from the first, to envisage integral Trade Unionism as the expression of all authentic values, and to view Socialist party politics as a sign and a danger of corruption. Sorel expected the *syndicats* to become a separate and self-sufficient kingdom of God, bearers of a new morality and a new civilisation. The idea of secession, of total separation from the surrounding world, was not yet worked out at this stage by Sorel, but the tutelage exercised by professional politicians at the head of the political labour parties was already bitterly assailed by him.[6]

Before Sorel had an opportunity to develop those ideas, he became deeply involved in the tremendous experience that at the turn of the century shook France to its foundations.

In becoming a *Dreyfusard* Sorel was not really concerned with destroying the power of the Church, the Army, or militant chauvinism as an end in itself. He gave himself soul and body to a mystique pitted against another mystique: the fight for abstract justice and the pure truth against the supposedly life-giving and power-sustaining forces of national myth, prejudice and tradition, represented by *"les autorités sociales"* of bygone days. In a sense Sorel took the side of the Socratics whom he had earlier so bitterly condemned. Sorel's hopes for a purifying *ricorsi* soon gave way to disillusionment. In the words of another significant figure who went through a somewhat similar experience, Charles Péguy, the Dreyfus "*mystique* degenerated into *politique*. . . ." The Dreyfus affair and its aftermath, says Sorel,

> produced an extraordinary accumulation of accidents, very much like those which sometimes enable the physicist in his laboratory to see suddenly in a wholly unexpected manner, and under an almost transparent veil, laws which had escaped long methodological investigation.[7]

The consequences of the affair revealed "the inadequacy of the Socialist teachings of the day." In joining the non-proletarian forces in a struggle for not distinctly proletarian aims, the workers lost their own identity and the clarity of their proletarian purpose. Anti-clericalism proved to be, in fact, only a springboard for power-thirsty demagogues of both varieties, the bourgeois radical and the socialist politicians. The Marxist principle of class war was "definitely submerged in the democratic ocean of the unity of the people."

Sorel goes on to draw a momentous lesson from this failure: "The parliamentary socialists lost a great deal of their prestige, men of violence covered themselves with glory." The affair revealed the vital importance of sustained direct action "with its very frequent accompaniment of acts of violence," as a method distinct from sporadic acts of violence, which were no more than "simple accidents which come to trouble the normal advance" of a movement. This discovery called for a revision of Marxism or, rather, a return to its authentic tradition. Sorel's reappraisal of Socialist teachings was carried out not only under the impression of the *Affaire*, but not less importantly also under the impact of and in direct reference to the great "Revisionist" controversy, begun by Eduard Bernstein at the turn of the century.

SOREL'S REACTION to the Revisionist heresy should be considered alongside the violent responses of Lenin, Mussolini (the first Communist in Europe in that he forced the Reformists out of the Party), Rosa Luxemburg and Parvus-Helphand. Theirs was a passionate reassertion of revolutionary voluntarism and élitism, and of the early revolutionary and universalist Messianism of Marx, in opposition to Bernstein's tendency to turn the Socialist parties into a Left-wing of parliamentary democracy and an integral part of the national body politic. The revulsion from the Revisionist renunciation of Revolution propelled others into a quite different direction. One of the Italian theoreticians of Syndicalism (he later became a prophet of the corporate state and a close collaborator of *il Duce*), Sergio Pannunzio, traces the beginning of his evolution from Socialism to Fascism to the shock administered to him by the "Revisionist heresy." Unlike the above-mentioned anti-Revisionists, Sorel accepted the whole of Bernstein's social-economic critique of Orthodox Marxism, but drew diametrically opposite political conclusions from those of Bernstein.

In his *Décomposition du Marxisme* (1908)[8] Sorel agrees with the thesis (indeed states it

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[6] G. Sorel: *Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats* (1898); *Mes raisons du syndicalisme* (1910); both reprinted in *Matériaux d'une théorie du prolétariat* (Paris, 1919); also Sorel: *D'Aristote à Marx* (Paris, 1935), pp. 263 ff.

[7] *Matériaux*, pp. 283–4.

[8] Translated into English by Irving L. Horowitz as an Appendix to his *Radicalism and Revolt against Reason: the Social Theories of Georges Sorel* (1961), pp. 207–54.

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more emphatically than Bernstein himself) that Capitalism had not failed at all. More than that, the progress of capitalist production and of its inevitable concomitant, trade unionism, had not only raised the workers' standard of life but also blunted the edge of Class War, since collective bargaining had turned the workers into partners of management rather than enemies thereof. In the early days of the Industrial Revolution it was the financiers and usurers, totally ignorant of the problems of technology, who laid down the law for industrialists and engineers; while at the same time the workers, stupid brutes, snatched away from the plough or artisan workshop, had to be kept in line with the help of brutal methods. But in the meantime technologically-trained employers had come into their own, and workers had learned to handle the machine and even to like it. Capitalism had evolved sufficient powers of adjustment to cope with passing crises. There were, thus, no technological or social-economic reasons for interfering with the workings of capitalism. Not even in the sphere of salaries and wages, since a rough kind of justice of reward proportionate to contribution was being realised by capitalism. Socialism was not going to change that, because in this respect, Marxism, Sorel claims, was closer to the Manchester School than to the "justice"-obsessed Utopians of the earlier days (who thought in terms of fool-proof blue-prints and perfect egalitarian justice, consciously and artificially contrived, and not of the workings of the mechanism of production).

If this be so, then why Revolution at all? The question is especially insistent as Sorel has no sympathy at all with what he regards as the modern version of a *Jacquerie*—the envious desire of the poor to redistribute property for the sake of equality? And if the Revolution is an absolute imperative, for moral or other reasons, are we not thrown back upon the idea of a *putschist* seizure of political power for the purpose of imposing the socialist order by violence and ukase—in a word, "Blanquism"? Sorel will not give up the Revolution, but he will reject Blanquism, and this on quite original (though mistaken) grounds. Blanquism—he claims—did not really envisage the uprising of a class, but the arrogation of the revolutionary mission by a political party, in fact by bourgeois intellectuals, who shared neither the needs and the way of life nor the real aspirations of the genuine workers. We reach here the nodal point already foreshadowed in Sorel's theory of revolutionary syndicalism based on the idea of violence. Sorel sees the proletariat—organised in *syndicats*—not as paupers fighting for "a larger share of the cake" but as the force pre-destined by history to enthrone a new civilisation and a heroic morality on the ruins of the decaying bourgeois world. The authenticity of this force and singleness of its purpose were—as said before—vitiated and distorted by professional politicians, intellectuals, and by the corrupting effects of parliamentary party politics. Sorel believes he is fighting for a return to "the true Marx." He tries to depict Marx as a prophet of the embattled class and the enemy of party politics. He fails to mention the relevant passages in the *Communist Manifesto* as well as the famous article 7a of the general Rules of the International—"the proletariat can act as a class only by constituting itself as a distinct political party." But he quotes with fervent approval the concluding passage in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx's famous tract against Proudhon,

> The antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is a struggle of a class against class, a struggle which carried to its highest expression is a total revolution ... the clash of body with body, as its final denouement ... combat or death: bloody struggle or extinction.... It is in this form that the question is inexorably put.

Sorel then makes much of the International's Circular (in which Marx's share is rather uncertain) against Bakunin's "Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men's Association." This ridicules the idea of putting a "vanguard" of men recruited from the privileged classes above the masses ("cannon fodder"), to act "as intermediaries between the revolutionary idea and the popular instincts," in order to bring to the fore "advocates without a cause, doctors without treatments and without science, students of billiards, shopkeepers and others employed in commerce, and especially journalists of the petty press ... *déclassé* ... who retrieved, in the International, a career and an issue."

Sorel quotes with glee Engels' description of the political struggle in the modern (bourgeois) state in *The Origins of the Family*: "a body of intellectuals invested with privileges and possessing so-called political means for defending itself against the attacks of other groups of intellectuals and to acquire the profits of public offices. Parties are organised for the acquisition of these public posts." Sorel not only refuses to draw any distinction between bourgeois politicians and socialist politicians; all his scorn is directed against the latter—because of their greater hypocrisy.

These were two entirely different things: the revolutionary élan of a class acting from instinct and in full simplicity, also a class that had accomplished its apprenticeship, evolved a system of ideas and values, a juridical framework of

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its own, and had reached full awareness of its historic mission to enthrone a new civilisation and a new moral order; and the connivance of professional party politicians, banking on the revolution to deliver to them "the object of their cupidity," the state. Sorel refers also with approval to Bernstein's exposure of the cant which under the guise of formal popular sovereignty makes civil servants, professional politicians, and newspaper owners run the show, and to his definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat as "the dictatorship of club orators and literati."

AT BOTTOM, WE ARE FACED HERE with the problem which had never ceased to perplex mankind—the question of the very legitimacy of politics. Its utter vagueness and elusive character, the mixture of abstract principle and crass ambition, of objective goals and sheer histrionics, of rational argument and squalid bamboozling; its seeming remoteness from the concrete, measurable, and truly necessary things—all this leads to the despairing conclusion that whatever the politicians, men of no particular training, ultimately dilettanti, say or do is but a mask and pretence for the will to power, power for its own sake. "Politics!" exclaims Paul Valéry, "at the word I am overcome with silence.... I regard the political necessity of exploiting all that is lowest in man's psyche as the greatest danger of the present time." Sorel would add *bourgeois* politics, but he means democratic politics: the competition for power or rather for the favour of the people who held the prize of power. Politics of this type emerged—Sorel claims—in Europe, more precisely in France, only at the end of the 18th century, as a function of an all-embracing new *Weltanschauung*. This leads him to undertake a fundamental reckoning with the 18th-century tradition. He rejects it root and branch as a colossal derangement, an alienation, and thus it justifies his prophecy of its imminent demise at the hands of the victorious proletariat.

> All our efforts [Sorel writes] should aim at preventing bourgeois ideas from poisoning the class which is arriving; that is why we can never do enough to break every link between the people and the literature of the 18th century... to demolish this whole scaffolding of conventional falsehoods and to ruin the prestige still enjoyed by those who vulgarise the vulgarisation of the 18th century.[9]

One is reminded of Mussolini's boast made in 1926 for which many parallels could be found in statements by Fascist and Nazi spokesmen: "We represent a new principle in the world; we represent the exact, categorical, definitive antithesis of the whole world of democracy, plutocracy, freemasonry, in short the whole world of the immortal principles of 1789."

In this utter repudiation of 18th-century values and the conscious endeavour to replace them by different, indeed contrasting principles, Sorel parts company not merely with the liberal-democratic tradition of the modern era, but in the last analysis also with every shade of socialism known hitherto.

Force, Terror, & Renewal

"LES ILLUSIONS DU PROGRÈS" is the central issue on which Sorel takes up his fight against the 18th-century tradition: that belief in some final salvationist station of the historic process, the preordained dénouement of all contradictions and conflict into a state of concord, harmony, resulting from the final victory of the basic rationality and social nature of man over all the disturbing and corrupting influences of bygone ages—ignorance and selfishness, oppression and evil teachings. The essential features of this religion of progress were its abstract universalism and its humanitarian optimism. Sorel proclaims his bitter enmity for this religion of peace and concord, in the name of a religion of struggle and war. The opposition between the two approaches was to him fundamental and all-embracing. Sorel's most faithful disciple, Edouard Berth, put his finger on it, invoking Nietzsche's uncompromising challenge ("are you pacific, or are you warrior-like?") and Proudhon's famous disquisition on the place of war in the scheme of civilisation (its role as the lever of all the great values). It was either the one or the other. Each of the two basic attitudes determined a system of values, a morality, a pattern of behaviour quite irreconcilable with the ones shaped by the other; in brief, of concord on one side, and violence on the other, of universal reconciliation or the victory of the best. Sorel entirely ignores the 18th-century humanist and universalist ingredients in both the original impulse and the ultimate vision of Socialism.[10]

The facile optimism of the rationalists rouses Sorel to a fury of contempt. He takes a malignant pleasure in the resistance, recalcitrance, and intractableness of things; he is hypnotised by insoluble contradictions and conflict. Sorel despises Descartes, the philosopher of clarity and harmony, and adores Pascal, the tormented prophet, weighed down by the mystery of evil and consumed by a yearning for salvation. The former epitomises the "small science" of smug positivism and automatic mechanism, the latter

[9] G. Sorel, *Les Illusions du progrès* (5th ed.; Paris, 1947), pp. 275–86.

[10] Edouard Berth: *Les Méfaits des intellectuels* (1926), pp. 95 ff.; also under the pen-name of Jean Darville, in *La Monarchie et la Classe Ouvrière: une Enquête* (ed. Georges Valois, 1914), pp. cxxx ff.

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represents the "great science"—true vision suspended over unfathomable abysses. To take a characteristic instance, Sorel is scathing about the social catholicism of the Modernist movement in the Church of Leo XIII, and its endeavour to explain away the mysteries, "absurdities" and irrationalities of revealed religion as parables and symbols of rational truths and liberal social ethics. Needless to say, he prefers a "tough," wholly "indigestible" religion.

Humanitarian rationalism appears to Sorel a colossal lie which had a most stultifying and corrupting effect, breeding an arrogant and capricious wish to obtain full gratification quickly and cheaply, to make a cowardly escape from the realities of life and the lessons of history. It was a dishonest simplicism that reduces the mysteries of nature and complexities of existence into encyclopaedias and digests, glib rhetoric and castles in the air, and fosters an unprincipled readiness to compromise and bargain. Conflict and War were the fathers of all true morality and manly responsibility.

We need not be detained by Sorel's critique, at times acute, at times quite fanciful, of the roots of the 18th-century philosophy. More important for us are Sorel's connection with the far-reaching and lasting course of the rationalist ideology.

For the French Revolution produced the strange type of the fanatical would-be saviour in a hurry who sees himself justified in forcing everybody to be free. A unanimous happiness would follow the extermination of all evil recalcitrants, in any case deviants who were doomed by History. The more common breed of "the religion of progress," however, has been the professional politician or intellectual in politics who banded together in political parties ostensibly to serve and guide the people in the direction of the desired state of social happiness, but in fact to cajole the people with promises, blandishments, and tricks into giving them power. The progressive ideology had little real relevance. Rhetors, sophists, adventurers, speculators, clowns all rolled into one, neither coping with real problems, nor rooted in any ancient group loyalties, nor part of historic institutions; they were ultimately parasites. They gambled on the frustrations and envious dissatisfactions of men. They encouraged indolent craving for easy gratification. Their weapons were ruse and cunning.

As against "bourgeois deceit and decadence" (of which Socialist politicians had become an integral part), the arrival of the proletariat presages a purifying *ricorsi*. The proletariat comes to bring war and not peace; to add burdens, not to alleviate them; to heighten tension, and not to offer a *détente*. It struggles on in the full consciousness of its destiny to inherit the earth: not to come to an accommodation with the existing establishment, but to eradicate it entirely. Its heroes are warriors, and not politicians, diplomats, or negotiators.

A new, revolutionary, and all-transforming principle associated with the modern industrial effort—the communion with the machine—is a lever of creative freedom, a warrant of integrity, an educational discipline, a vantage point for seeing things in their full concreteness and interaction, in contrast to the vagueness, the abstractness, and indeterminacy as well as the moral laxity and selfish arbitrariness of liberal-democratic and socialist politics, indeed of bourgeois society in general.

Sorel's terms of reference, metaphors and simili are all taken from religious movements and war. The abounding words are honour and glory, sublimity, heroism, virility and loftiness. The comparison is between the *syndicats* and their impending general strike and the early Christians or the extreme Protestant sects waiting for a Second Coming or the monastic orders which arose to purify the Church. Sorel says again and again that the fact that these historic expectations were never fulfilled did not matter. All that mattered was that in each case the myth had enough vitality to sustain the believers' resolve and to turn them into little kingdoms of God, with an ethos, a high morality, indeed a culture of their own, in strenuous opposition to the rotten world around them. The proud self-awareness of representing a higher civilisation and morality was bound to inspire the workers with puritan virtues: love of the job for its own sake, precision and loyalty, care for the heritage of the future heirs of the earth. The redeemed proletariat would be marked above all by the heroic selflessness and disinterestedness peculiar to crusaders and soldiers of liberty.

To keep themselves pure and resolute it was absolutely essential for the workers to cut themselves off entirely from the unregenerate world. This meant in the first place shaking off the tutelage of politicians and intellectuals, with all their machinations and corrupt practices. In the second place, it meant class war *à l'outrance*: no truck with the employers. The more isolated the *syndicats* were, the more they would have to fall back upon their own resources: the more intensely would they become aware of their own identity and high calling: the richer and deeper and more authentic would their own values become. In the form of direct action and sporadic strikes (in preparation for the break-through of the great General Strike) the struggle would also gradually shape a new and wholly autonomous

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juridical system, which would be based on the morality of a confraternity at war. War—as in the Proudhonian vision—would be the begetter of the virtues of heroism, total devotion, sense of solidarity, right, and honour. The strikes were sure to engender and sustain new conceptions and new patterns of relationship between the leaders and the led (the former embodying the true general will, and not the mystical general will of Rousseauist democracy). Occupation of factories would accustom the workers to see themselves as the legitimate owners and managers of social wealth. The physical clash with employers, state authorities, and strike breakers would educate the strikers in the use of violence. Sustained by the spirit of a Revolutionary Army, the workers would not be moved by envy, by a craving for revenge or a vision of spoils, let alone self-pity. They wanted a clean fight—a judgment of God—in the heroic tradition of medieval chivalry. But their campaign was also conceived in the spirit of a Napoleonic resolve utterly to annihilate the enemy.

IT WAS THE VISION of the General Strike that was to inspire and sustain the proletariat in their heroic struggle.[11] The General Strike was the great myth, but it was most emphatically not a vision of Utopia. The Utopia was, according to Sorel, an intellectual proposition, a description of a desirable state of affairs which would be an improvement upon the existing one, thus a contrivance and concoction of intellectuals. Myth, however, was not a truth to be analysed and taken to pieces, but a power that stirs the soul, an ensemble of images that satisfy and propel all our faculties. Upon it are focused all our urges and drives, dreams and hopes. It was a vision of life turned drama, a spasm of final fulfilment, like the revolutionary breakthrough, or the Second Coming, the arrival of the Messiah, or the last war of liberation.

The myth presupposes man to be not a creature of reason, but a suggestible being, whose intuitive grasp of and reaction to an uplifting heroic vision would raise him out of himself into that *élan vital* which opens to him the domain of creative freedom. He then ceases to be a link in the chain of natural causality, and (in the spirit of Henri Bergson) makes a new beginning towards a unique destiny.

The General Strike signified the triumph of violence at the end of a series of turbulent clashes. Sorel's eloquent pages on the general strike read like a poetic evocation, a prophecy rather than a prognosis or a blueprint. We are left in the dark as to how the great drama of violence would really unfold. We are told that its essence would not be in much bloodshed or acts of brutality, in a large number of victims or untold destruction. These would be few; they would bear rather the character of a warning. What Sorel seems to have had in mind is the overwhelming will to win, the supreme confidence of conquerors, the iron determination to go to the bitter end, in the face of all which the adversary flinches, reels back, because he lacks the conviction and the self-assurance of those who embody manifest destiny and know it.

> A social policy founded on middle-class cowardice, which consists in always surrendering before the threat of violence, cannot fail to engender the idea that the middle class is condemned to death, and that its disappearance is only a matter of time. Thus every conflict which gives rise to violence becomes a vanguard fight, and nobody can foresee what will arise from such engagements. . . . Each time they come to blows the strikers hope that it is the beginning of the great *Napoleonic* battle. . . . In this way the practice of strikes engenders the notion of a catastrophic revolution.[12]

At a later date Sorel defined violence as

> an intellectual doctrine, the will of the powerful minds which know where they are going, the implacable resolve to attain the final goals of Marxism by means of syndicalism. Lenin has furnished us a striking example of that psychological violence.[13]

The determination of the assailants and the faltering of the attacked mutually condition each other.

THE CAPACITY AND READINESS to resort to violence become the test of faith and of belonging to the elect. "*. . . en se regardant comme le grand moteur de l'histoire . . . il a le sentiment très net de la gloire . . . son rôle historique et de l'héroisme. . . . La mesure de sa valeur.*" Sorel resorts

[11] The great wave of proletarian militancy of the first decade of the 20th century was accompanied by much violence and bloodshed. It produced the first general strike in history, in Italy in 1904; it saw the revolutionary upheaval in Russia carried by a vast strike movement a year later; it sent hundreds of thousands of workers on to the streets of Paris on the First of May in 1906; it witnessed the bloody clashes between strikers and security forces all over Europe, coming in France to a climax in the terrible battles at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges and Darveil with numerous casualties on both sides; the Belgium Socialist Party resorted successfully to mass strike to obtain universal suffrage. Those were the days of the grand debate on the general strike as the instrument of the "revolutionary breakthrough" and as a means of stopping an international war. It is enough to recall Rosa Luxemburg's pamphlets on the subject.

[12] *Reflections*, pp. 90–1.

[13] J. Variot, *Propos de G. Sorel*, p. 55.

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in this connection to nomenclature of stern determinism. The final act of violence in the victorious strike would be "no more than the necessary effort to make the old withered branches fall to the ground." The fall would be like the final crush of the glacier tearing itself away from its old base, "after having been attacked by the sun for many centuries."

An apologia for "violence"? Sorel devotes quite a few pages to the distinction between force and violence, and it is a distinction which later would become a commonplace among ideologists of violence of all kinds. Force was an instrument for maintaining existing power (what would nowadays be called "the establishment").

> The object of force is to impose a certain social order in which the minority governs, while violence tends to the destruction of that order. The middle class have used force since the beginning of modern times, while the proletariat now reacts against the middle class and against the State by violence.

It was hidden and camouflaged, operating not so much with weapons of direct coercion as by manipulating the levers of power, blocking insidiously all attempts at change or cunningly denuding them of any real effectiveness, while making much of form and ritual.

> Thus we see that economic forces are closely bound up with political power, and capitalism finally perfects itself to the point of being able to dispense with any direct appeal to the public force, except in very exceptional cases. . . .

Sorel gives an interesting slant to the Marxist description of the bourgeois State as the executive of the exploiting classes (and to Engels' denunciation of parliamentary "cretinism") by substituting intellectuals and politicians for capitalists and their stooges:

> There is a great resemblance between the electoral democracy and the Stock Exchange; in one case as in the other it is necessary to work upon the simplicity of the masses, to buy the co-operation of the most important papers, and to assist chance by an infinite of trickery. There is not a great deal of difference between a financier who puts big-sounding concerns on the market which come to grief in a few years, and the politician who promises an infinity of reforms to the citizens which he does not know how to bring about, and which resolve themselves simply into an accumulation of Parliamentary papers. . . . Democrats and businessmen have quite a special science for making the deliberative assemblies approve of their swindling; the Parliaments are as packed as shareholders' meetings . . . profound psychological affinities resulting from these methods of operation; democracy is the paradise of which unscrupulous financiers dream.

In brief, the régime of bourgeois liberalism rested on force: on ruse, cunning, and make-believe. Sorel proclaims the violence preached by him to be noble and chivalrous because it was open and direct and constituted a full and unequivocal commitment, without subterfuge, reservations, and convenient avenues of retreat.

As for terror, it is not always to Sorel only a question of inspiring fear or self-confidence by demonstration. Andreu calls "extraordinary" the sentence in which Sorel asks himself "whether in liquidating so large a number of literati and *férus d'idéologie* the Terror had not rendered a service to France. Perhaps Napoleon would not have so easily consolidated his administration had his régime not been preceded by a great purge. . . ."[14]

Violence in effect is the token of authenticity. The revulsion from hypocrisy (which is just another way of putting the quest of "authenticity") leads to the glorification of instinct and force, and to a contempt for devious men, especially intellectuals. The greater the contempt for conventional "falsehood," the greater the glory of violence. Sorel ponders over the difference between the severity with which old heroic societies punished deceit and fraud (while being lenient towards crimes of violence) and the heavy punishments meted out to crimes of violence (coupled with the indulgent treatment of crooks) in modern commercial society. He upbraids the rude justice meted out to offenders by primitive societies in accordance with their ancient notions of honour. Surely a thrust of the knife by an *"homme honnête en ses moeurs, mais violent"* will have less serious moral consequences than thievery and deceit, or *"les débordements de la luxure."* For "old ferocity," Sorel complains, "tends to be replaced by ruse."

On the eve of World War I we find Sorel speculating on the two possible ways of arresting bourgeois decadence and Socialist demoralisation that accompanies it. At the end of the *Insegnamenti sociali della economica contemporanea*, he writes that "a great international war [which he regards as not very likely] may have as its effect the suppression of the causes which tend today to favour the taste for moderation and the desire for social peace." It would certainly bring to power "men with the will to govern." Sorel's other hope is

> a great extension of proletarian violence, which would make the bourgeoisie see the revolutionary reality and fill it with disgust for the humanitarian platitudes with which Jaurès has been lulling them to sleep.

[14] Pierre Andreu, *Notre maître, M. Sorel* (1953), p. 192.

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Indeed, Sorel wants the capitalists to fight, to believe in themselves and in their class interests, to be like the early captains of industry or American robber barons. Let them mind their own business, and not act as philanthropists with a social conscience, always ready to conciliate, to give in. This softness was a sign of effeminacy, and it demoralised the workers. By being what history has meant them to be—harsh and ruthless taskmakers—the employers would deploy their potentialities to the full, and keep their workers on their tiptoes as fighters, and thus hasten the Day of Confrontation.

> When the governing classes, no longer daring to govern, are ashamed of their privileged situation, are eager to make advances to their enemies, and proclaim their horror of all cleavage in society, it becomes much more difficult to maintain in the minds of the proletariat this idea of cleavage without which Socialism cannot fulfil its historical role.

Reformist socialists who wish to act as conciliating go-betweens, who work for "social peace" and national unity were traitors to the working class, and destroyers of morality. "Finally . . . anti-patriotism becomes an essential element in the Syndicalist programme . . . an inseparable part of socialism."

In words reminiscent of Lenin's élitism, Sorel says that the *syndicats* must search less for the greatest number of adherents than for the organisation of the vigorous elements; revolutionary strikes are excellent for effecting a solution by weeding out the pacifists who would spoil the best troops, "dedicated to the absolute."

Between Marx & Mussolini

WHAT WILL BE the state of affairs on the morrow of the victorious General Strike? What kind of society was desirable or likely to emerge? On this Sorel is maddeningly vague, and he has many excuses. He had rejected Utopianism from the start. He believes in the unpredictable Bergsonian creativeness of the *élan vital*. He was prepared to endorse Mussolini's famous slogan: "Every system is an error, every theory is a prison." But what Sorel does say on the subject reminds one very much of Lenin's Old Left conceptions in *State and Revolution* and of contemporary New Left notions. Sorel rejects the idea of any guidance, supervision, or control from outside and from above, even if those supervisors are democratically elected (since the supervisors would always be thinking of the next election). And he would not conceive of tribunals or penalties or prisons to coerce the victorious proletarians. There would be no need for anything of that kind. Steeled in revolutionary ideology and having gone through the fire of strikes, the workers would, in the manner of true Soldiers of Liberty (or, perhaps, warriors of God) have developed a superb blend of dignity, pride, individualistic self-reliance, and an enthusiastic readiness and capacity to engage in cooperative effort. They would thus be totally free in their utter unanimity. The key phrases here are "heroic exploits . . . extraordinary enthusiasm . . . ardour takes the place of discipline . . . the greatest possible zeal . . .," etc.

A few lines later, Sorel drops the very revealing remark that as a result of his farouche individualism on the one hand and his keen sense of responsibility on the other, the soldier of the Revolutionary armies

> felt no pity for the generals or officers whom he saw guillotined after a defeat on the charge of dereliction of duty. . . . In his eyes failure could only be explained by some grave error on the part of his leaders . . . made him approve of rigorous measures against men who . . . caused it to lose the fruit of so much heroism.

Obviously, where absolute perfection is postulated as predetermined, any failing is found to appear as the result of ill-will, perversion, and treason. Where unanimity—*"l'unanimité qui va se former incessamment"*—is expected as inevitable, any dissent must seem an arbitrary and selfish deviation. Unanimity must be made manifest by all means. The road from perfectionist anarchy to democratic centralism (perhaps better called totalitarian democracy) is not a very long one.

AND YET, numerous and close as are the points of contact between Sorel and Bolshevism, the spirit and temper that pervade his writings are utterly uncongenial to proletarian mentality, and alien to Marxist philosophy and Socialist values. It was not for nothing that on being asked whether he had been influenced by Sorel's work one Syndicalist leader replied, with a shrug of the shoulders, that he had "read only Alexandre Dumas"! Reality was different. The real workers could hardly have been expected to lend an ear to appeals to heroic self-abnegation in order to enthrone someone else's lofty morality, or to entertain the idea that they should make superhuman efforts on behalf of a proffered mythology.

In spite of Sorel's insistent claim to be remembered as "the faithful servant of the proletariat," he decisively parts company with Socialism and comes close to Fascism. It is true that Lenin, like Marx before him, struck many élitist notes; he belaboured the bourgeoisie (and the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries) for their philistinism, flabbiness, and hypocrisy, and extolled the resoluteness and determination of

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his own revolutionary fighters. Yet the heroic qualities to him were never an end in themselves, but only a means of arriving speedily at a terminal régime of social justice; at most, they were tokens of devotion. The display of vitality or the achievement of glory are not values in themselves. The Socialist Revolution is not made to create a superior breed of man. The institutions of the Socialist system are sure to beget better men: better for being, above all, less rapaciously selfish and more cooperative, more rational and more civilised; but certainly not for being inspired by a combative urge for self-expression as members of some superior élite or master race. Nothing is more alien to Socialism than Nietzscheanism. One could thus hardly call the teachings of Sorel "socialism." What they are in fact is a Nietzschean repudiation of bourgeois mediocrity and deceit and a Nietzschean philosophy of élitism applied to the proletariat. Sorel turned the tables on Nietzsche. While the prophet of "the Will to Power" denounced socialist ideology as slave ethics, Sorel expects a revaluation of all values and the enthronement of a heroic civilisation to come from the proletariat. Its *syndicats* are called upon to play the part of *"les autorités sociales"* fulfilled in the past by the ruling families of an aristocracy or patriciate. The impulse of both thinkers was (to say it again) the same: revulsion from the shabbiness, the hypocrisy, the meanness and mediocrity of bourgeois society in the 19th century. A resurgence of heroic virtues was an end in itself to both prophets. It is scarcely true to say that Sorel's aim was to replace the political authoritarian state of the bourgeois intellectuals by "a network of the free *syndicats*." This new type of social organisation had, in his eyes, no value in itself except as a lever for the new heroic morality. In spite of Sorel's preoccupation with juridical concepts and institutions, his concern was really with a "new heart" and not with an new institutional order. Sorel's glorification of the sense of manifest destiny, of the will to conquer and the joy of struggle as the begetters of all heroic virtues, transforms these from means into ends in themselves. Heroic for what? It does not, in the last analysis, much matter for what purpose. After all, Sorel speaks with deep admiration of the heroic qualities of the bourgeoisie in its prime, and he enjoins the proletarians to be fierce and uncompromising so that even their effeminate philanthropic employers might recover the kind of militant virtues which characterised the early captains of industry.

Sorel opts for the heroic proletariat and not for the re-born bourgeoisie—as he might well have, and as indeed some of his followers did—because, it appears, he has the Hegelian sense that the next phase of history belongs to the proletariat. It is not because he wants to redeem the proletariat as an oppressed class. He speaks with the same admiration of the heroism of the Spartans, the early Christians, the apocalyptic Protestant sects, the monastic orders, the soldiers of the *Grande Armée*, and the Mazzinians.

> In the total ruin of institutions and of morals there remains something which is powerful, new, and intact, and it is that which constitutes, properly speaking, the soul of the revolutionary proletariat. Nor will this be swept away in the general decadence of moral values, if the workers have enough energy to bar the road to the middle-class corrupters, answering their advances with the plainest brutality.... The bond which I pointed out in the beginning between Socialism and proletarian violence appears to us now in all its strength. It is to violence that Socialism owes those high ethical values by means of which it brings *salvation* to the modern world.
>
> Proletarian violence... appears as a very beautiful and heroic thing... in the service of the primordial interests of our civilisation.... [It] may save the world from barbarism.... Let us salute the revolutionaries just as the Greeks saluted the Spartan heroes who defended Thermopylae and thus contributed to maintaining light in the ancient world.

THE TURN SOON came for Syndicalism to be rejected by Sorel as "hyper-demagoguery"—as Socialism had been before, also for its "demagoguery" and "stupidity." Sorel stumbled upon (or rather was lured into) a new view of historic opportunity: the extreme nationalist Royalist Right as candidates for a revival of virility and heroism. He gave his blessing to a bizarre flirtation between a handful of young enthusiasts of the Syndicalist Left and of the extreme Right. It was not really, as far as Sorel himself was concerned, a joyous espousal of the Royalist-nationalist cause, rather a half-hearted, uneasy relationship, hampered by a certain sense of incongruity. But the young disciples, who came from syndicalism as well as those who came from integral nationalism, and who had as yet no past to live down, were able to enjoy the *affaire* with undisturbed relish.

A signal event in Sorel's *rapprochement* with the Right was his article on Charles Péguy under the title *"Le Réveil de l'âme française, le Mystère de la Charité de Jeanne d'Arc"* (1910). In it he hailed the proud and defiant resurgence of traditionalist Catholic French patriotism and militarism as a *revanche* of the anti-Dreyfusards upon the "dregs of the humanitarianism" of the Sorbonne (and democracy in general). Sorel prophesied that these old-new ideas were destined to "direct contemporary thought."

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The programmatic Declaration of the *"Cité Française,"* the still-born organ of the Syndicalist-Nationalist alliance, was signed by Sorel (who drafted it), his two disciples Georges Valois and Edouard Berth, and the two royalists Pierre Gilbert and Jean Variot (author of the *"Propos de Georges Sorel"*). The aim of the editors was to "liberate French intelligence from all those ideologies . . . which dominated Europe in the last century." Whatever the differences dividing them, they were perfectly united in the opinion that

> for any solution of the problems of the modern world . . . it is absolutely necessary to destroy the democratic institutions . . . as the greatest social peril to all classes of the community, in the first place the working classes. Democracy mixes up the classes, in order to enable a few bands of politicians, associated with financiers or dominated by them, to exploit the producers.

The editors pledge themselves to foster the self-awareness of every social class by weaning it away from the stultifying teachings of democracy, and to restore to it its original virility and sense of mission.

For some years Sorel became a regular contributor to the nationalist *L'Indépendance*; he also emerges as the somewhat reluctant patron saint of the *"Cercle Proudhon,"* where his disciples and the young Rightist enthusiasts (Henri Lagrange, Gilbert Maire, René de Maranes, André Vincent) were trying with the blessing of Maurras, Barrès, and other nationalist luminaries, to evolve a type of French national socialism—Proudhon against Marx—which would fight democracy, "the stupidest of dreams . . . the mortal error." Capitalism was also the enemy: "the capitalist régime which destroys in the community what the democratic ideas destroy in the domain of the spirit, that is the nation, the family, the *moeurs*, substituting the law of gold for the law of the blood."[15]

Nihilism: from Sorel to Valois

THE MAN WHO USED Sorel as a foundation stone for a genuine and full-blooded Fascist philosophy was Georges Valois. Valois has been called the French Mussolini *manqué*,[16] who in 1925 tried to emulate the Duce's triumphant march on Rome (but failed to reach Paris). He started out as one of the wildest young Leftists on the Left Bank, and then wandered for years across the globe to South-east Asia, Russia, and other distant places. On his return to Paris Valois was smitten by a revelation—the idea of élitist authority. He writes a book entitled *L'Homme qui vient: Philosophie de l'Autorité*, and dedicates it to the "young, energetic men, whose intelligence has been stultified and whose muscles had been rendered flabby by voluptuousness," as a result of a philosophy of "moral anarchy" which for generations now had been teaching "the abolition of all restraints." Valois defines his new ideal as "work, and its condition: authority and the State." He intends to confound the *"horde juive triomphante"* in the Dreyfus affair. Valois proclaims war on the three prophets who

> wrought ruin upon the modern world . . . three great criminals, three great impostors, Fathers of the lie . . . J. J. Rousseau, the false man of nature, Immanuel Kant, the false man of duty, and Karl Marx, the false man of necessity.

Valois identifies his own prophets: in the first placel, Sorel; then Charles Maurras, Carlyle, Kipling, H. G. Wells; the now-forgotten scientist René Quinton; the old masters (de Maistre, Bonald, Auguste Comte and Taine), but above all Nietzsche.

> I owe to Nietzsche my liberation. At a time when we stuck in the democratic humanitarian swamp . . . wasting our energies in an effort to solve inept problems . . . Nietzsche . . . *coup de fouet* . . . forced to us consider with true sincerity the real problems . . . to see ourselves without pity . . . the liberator of our energy.[17]

In fact, Valois' whole theory is nothing but a smudged, coarse-grained, and petulant variation on Nietzsche and Sorel.

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[15] *Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon* (*1er cahier*, Jan.–Feb. 1912); Meisel, *op. cit.*, pp. 183 ff. Edouard Berth will say in years to come that "in forming, together with Georges Valois, the *Cercle Proudhon*, with the aim of fighting democracy from the dual standpoint, the Nationalist and the Syndicalist, we came close to creating Fascism *avant la lettre*. . . ." This statement is re-echoed by Valois himself in his post-war book on Fascism, when he says that the *Cercle* "laid in 1912 the foundations for the Fascist synthesis." Georges Valois, *Le Fascisme*, p. 29; Freund, p. 231; for parallel developments in Italy see John A. Thayer: *Italy and the Great War, Politics and Culture* (1964); Enzo Santarelli: "Le Socialisme nationale en Italie: Précédents et origines," *Le Mouvement Social* (Jan.–Mar. 1965. Nr. 50); Jack J. Roth: "The Roots of Italian Fascism: Sorel and Sorelismo," *Journal of Modern History* (Vol. 39, 1967).

[16] Ernest Nolte: *Three Faces of Fascism* (1966), p. 473; Eugen Weber, "Nationalism, Socialism and National-Socialism in France," *French Historical Studies*, Vol. II. N. 3 (Spring, 1962); Yves Guchet: "Georges Valois ou l'Illusion Fasciste," *Revue Française de Science Politique* (Vol. XV, 1965).

[17] Georges Valois: *L'Homme qui vient: Philosophie de l'Autorité* (1909), Introduction.

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Sorel's élitist conception of the proletarian *syndicats* and their revivalist mission is transformed by Valois into a vision of the rule of born masters, "holders of the whip" over the slavish, indolent, swinish multitude. The masters are no longer a hereditary social class like ancient aristocracy—something quite impossible in the 20th century—or an élite of brains, but men endowed with the undefinable gifts of leadership who prove themselves in a Darwinian struggle and rivalry. You recognised them when you saw them coming, these men at the top, the successors to the medieval barons, the famous *condottieri* and the great capitalists. Their success is their title to legitimacy. The "strongest will reveal himself incontestably... no one will doubt his qualification, once he has defeated all the others." Never mind the means. Without ruthless, uninhibited urge for power and leadership, those *"enthousiastes, des hommes pleins d'appétits, avides de jouissances du commandement et des cruautés"* would never get there. It was the impotent but envious and cunning demagogues of democracy who spoke of "rights" and "justice" and flattered the masses.

Sorel's earliest concern was with authenticity, certainty, and social cohesion. He sought them first in the realities of organic historic tradition, then successively in Marxist teaching, in the inexorable determinations of productive effort, in the existential situation of the proletariats, finally in the life-giving collective myth. He never ceased to fear and hate self-willed arbitrariness and intellectual vagrancy. Georges Valois goes far beyond his master when he raises the instinctive will-to-power of the individual and the visceral ties of the community of blood—*"la vérité charnelle"*—to the dignity of absolutes.

It was the instincts that mattered most, and not the intellect. Man's mission was not to "know the world" or to learn to "know himself," but to fight.

> The means which you wish to employ for knowing yourself—intelligence—put it into second place, and do not use it for tasks for which it was not made.... It is a gift which was given to you not that you may know yourself, nor that you may know our *raison d'être*, but to enable you to understand, with the aid of experience and instinct, in what way the things surrounding you may serve and contribute to your growth. Apart from that, there is for you nothing but doubt, confusion, trouble, and death....

We are faced here with a fear of thought and analysis, a dread of choosing between alternatives, and a craving to be propelled mindlessly by powerful instincts or, for that matter, the force of habit.

"False sages and liars!" exclaims Valois, "to say that one is led by his intelligence is an error or a lie. Man is guided by his instincts. ... What is the brain? An organ like his foot, his hand, his eye, utilised by his instinct.... Who commands in living nature? It is the instinct of life." The power to act was superior to the ability to think. "Intellectuals!" calls Valois, "if you are true *hommes de commandement*, speak in the name of your energy, do not ask for power, take it. If you are strong, the people will recognise you as leaders." All creative force came from instinct, and this is why *"le maître de la vie"*, the Aristocrat, will never be an intellectual but an Energetic, the one whose life instinct had the greatest strength." The supreme fact of life—of men as well as of nations—was war.

> All the things that we call the pacific blessings of civilisation are the creations of war; civilisation itself is the fruit of war.... The nations... working today to develop a civilisation of peace, had themselves been formed by war and maintain their work of peace, of solidarity and of brotherhood thanks to nothing but war. War is the primary law of life, and it is for the species the only way of achieving the highest elevation of its life instinct....

This situation did not have to express itself in actual fighting. War-like rivalry was also present in an accumulation of so much power that all dangers from within and from without would be staved off without going to war. War is "a happy necessity for civilisation." It was also an instrument for realising social justice among the nations, "by wresting lands and resources which indolent and incompetent nations knew not how to utilise," and thus "abuse their sovereign rights over them."

The democratic politicians—a breed that emerged in the French Revolution—represented a kind of anti-élite of the *déclassé* of all classes. "The democratic régime is in the full sense an organised, systematic disorganisation of the nation, and carries with it its own ruin...." As for Socialism, it was only a new form of parliamentary exploitation which has simply changed the electoral formulae, but it pursues the same aim as the other parties—the conquest of power in order to obtain the wealth which that conquest provides...."[18]

Behind the anti-élite of democratic and socialist politicians, a loose congerie of adventurers who come and go, there stood an anti-élite acting from behind the scenes, but of the most distinct identity, cohesion, and continuity

[18] G. Valois: *La Monarchie et la classe ouvrière* (1914), p. 18.

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—the Jews. The politicians were no more than the puppets or agents of that Jewish power. The Jews were an anti-élite *par excellence*: few and physically weak, with no aristocratic tradition or martial qualities, intellectuals and reasoners, they could succeed and obtain the power that they so craved not by imposing themselves in an elemental irresistible sort of way, but through manipulation and scheming. They represented and embodied everything that was not instinctive and concrete, but was abstract and universal. Cut off from the land and its pursuits for so long, with no country of their own, with no share in the hard productive effort, they had developed two weapons which had no particular home or race: ideas and money. These became the instruments with the help of which those aliens could worm their way into French society and overcome the natural resistance and healthy egoism of a deeply rooted, idiosyncratic nation. Against French instinctive certainties, traditions and customs, the French conception of justice, they proclaimed and fostered an abstract universal natural law, the idea of Man *per se*, eternal ideal justice. Their *"patrie 'idéelle'"* was pitted against authentic soil-bound French patriotism: the French were seduced into adopting the abstract ideology of Revolution as their national ideology. The alien Jews could thus appear as most excellent Frenchmen, while remaining themselves a closely knit entity apart. Finance capitalism, *laissez-faire*, liberalism, rationalism as such, finally socialism founded on class war—all were Jewish devices to sap the self-assurance, the cohesion, the unity, and the authenticity of the French nation.

Parliamentary democracy became the convenient façade for the wire-pullers. Apparently an expression and guarantee of popular sovereignty, it was but a camouflage for the occult but real powers. Sorel had already drawn attention to the close similarity, and indeed the link, between speculators who gambled on the stock exchange and parasitic democratic politicians who gambled for power. He did that without specifically mentioning the Jews. However, the Dreyfusard eventually developed into a bitter anti-Semite, calling upon Europe to defend itself against "the Jewish peril" in the same way as the U.S. fought "the Yellow peril"; he blamed the Chekist terror upon the Jewish members of the Bolshevik Party. The Jews (Valois claims) had their agents in all parties, but they had lately concentrated their attention on the Socialists: for the sake of a better disguise, and in order to make sure that they became the heirs of the expropriated French bourgeoisie on the morrow of the Revolution which they were plotting. Once the revolutionary General Strike succeeded in paralysing all production, the ensuing chaos could be overcome only with the help of ready cash—gold. The Jewish financiers will have kept it in their safes; they will then appear as saviours, offer help, but extort a heavy price, namely complete domination over the economic and political life of the French nation. "It is probable that a terrible anti-Semitic movement will then develop and it will manifest itself through the most beautiful massacre of Jews in history." The Jews would then call in foreign troops to rescue them, in order that Jews and foreigners together share the spoils. Some of the participants in the debate on "The Monarchy and the Working Class" initiated and analysed by Valois see the Jews as working for the enemies of France —for England, Germany, and Italy. Others depict the Jew as the enemy of every authentic nation, and call for an international alliance against the common Jewish danger. Georges Valois himself coined the slogan *"L'or juif contre le sang français."*

The Jew thus appears as the lynch-pin of the whole theory, solving the contradiction between socialism and nationalism.[19]

A Cautionary Tale

THE EVOLUTION of syndicalist Sorelism towards pro-fascism is a cautionary tale which our younger as well as our older contemporaries might well take to heart. The revulsion from "hypocrisy" and the resulting quest for "authenticity" very easily evolve into a glorification of instinct and direct action. The condemnation of arbitrariness and the craving for certainty can so rapidly take the form of an apologia for an élite and its cult of violence. The emphasis upon the existential situation or collective myth has as its corollary the denial of individual judgment and personal decision, for it raises abstract sentiments to the level of absolutes. A downward slope leads from a populist apotheosis of primary and all-embracing experience—in contrast to analytical reasoning—to "gut thinking" and *Blut und Boden* racism. Finally, the idea of a Manichean confrontation between the forces of darkness and of light—both taken to be indivisible totalities and never just human admixtures of good and evil—easily becomes a warrant for violence without end.

[19] To cap it all, Georges Valois died in the Nazi concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen in 1944, having successively fallen out with the *Action Française*, given up Fascism, renounced anti-Semitism, embraced technocratic planning, invented the term *"Libéralisme communautaire,"* and returned to simple French patriotism.... What a comment on the spiritual torment of our century!

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THEATRE

Witkiewicz & the Corpses

On the Dialectic of Anachronism — By JAN KOTT

I MET Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz five or six years before the Second World War. I was then a student, and Witkiewicz sometimes dropped by as a guest to the seminars given by the Philosophy Department at Warsaw University. I had read his two novels and some of his plays that had been published in magazines or were circulating in manuscript copies. I saw many of his paintings; Witkacy (he used the name *"Witkacy"* as a contraction of his middle and last name) was very popular as a painter. He was making portraits at a low price, and he often gave them away free of charge. Later on I met some of his personal friends, or rather his "ex-" friends; Witkacy called them his "ideological enemies." He had the practice of keeping a numbered list of his acquaintances, and whenever he lowered the position of one of them, would inform him about it with an "official" letter. Once, as an annual, or semestrial, assignment, I wrote about his theory of Pure Form. Later on he invited me to his house. He showed me his collection of canes of famous women, artists, and politicians. There were among them, if I remember correctly, the little cane of Marie Curie and the umbrella of the pianist Ignacy Paderewski who, after Poland's recovery of independence, was the Prime Minister of the first Polish government.

I was under the spell of Witkacy; however, I was more fascinated by his personality and himself than by his creative work. I knew that he was an extraordinary and splendid man, but at the same time I did not have the slightest doubt that his special splendour belonged to another epoch. To the future? No! To the past. Witkacy as a man, writer and artist seemed to me like a dazzling relic from the very beginning of the Twentieth Century who had strayed into contemporary times.

It would not be worth mentioning these opinions of a student of thirty years ago were it not for the fact that it was then shared both by young intellectuals and by mature writers. By definition a precursor is one who swerves away from his own times. As a precursor of the Theatre of the Absurd, Witkacy was the most eminent in Poland and one of the most interesting in Europe. But he was as well—this may appear astonishing—one of the most original precursors of what might be called the intellectual and artistic climate of the 1950s, of its style of life and of thinking. And not only in Europe but in America as well. Witkacy, who came too early, seemed to his contemporaries as a man who came too late. It would be worthwhile to devote some attention to this very phenomenon of the Precursor who swerves away from his time or, to be more precise, to the problem of the dialectic of anachronism and innovation.

LET ME BEGIN with the simplest question, with Witkacy's painting. Witkiewicz had the rare gift, even among painters, of a rapid grasp of resemblances. His portraits resembled their models, even those paintings—the most expensive according to his price list—which were made under the influence of narcotics, and which were visionary and deformed. At that time the leading school of painters in Poland were the Post-Impressionists, for the most part students of Bonnard. The younger or more "modern" painters continued the experiments of the Constructivists and Cubists, rigorously practising abstract painting. Max Ernst and the Surrealists were still, at that time, almost unknown in Poland. Witkiewicz was somewhat slighted by painters; they considered his painting "literary." This "literariness" was very badly regarded by artists at that time. The Post-Impressionists and the Post-Cubists as well were preoccupied with form, quality of colour and composition; they were not interested in qualities that were extrinsic to the painting. According to them, Witkacy—the theoretician of Pure Form—was painting old-fashioned, figurative pictures. For them, even his visions were illustrations.

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I think that the painters were quite right. Today, from a greater perspective in time, the connections which link Witkacy's painting with the English Pre-Raphaelite School and with the Viennese Secession are obvious. The cold blue tones, the violet and rose colours in Witkacy's pastels, his unreal, ghostly lighting derive from Böcklin's painting; his thin, vanishing and undulating stroke, like the unfolding coils of a snake, is more ornamental than pictorial and comes closest to the style of Burne-Jones. But what was generally considered in the '20s and '30s as *passé*-ism became a live inspiration a quarter-of-a-century later.

The Viennese Secession, anathemised as "the epoch of the decline of taste," has come back triumphantly into fashion in furniture and perhaps most of all in posters. It has become a new tenet of style. Witkacy's portraits and compositions often strikingly call to mind the psychedelic posters which have become a new art-form for collectors. Witkacy's faces, which emerge from a colourful mist with their magnified eyes, with their grimaces of mouth and with all their striking resemblance to their models, are first of all psychological portraits. There is always tension and anxiety in them, a kind of tragic absence; they are faces from a narcotic "trip."

WITKACY used the term Pure Form for the particular metaphysical quality in painting and poetry which cannot be analysed into its primary elements. He called it "unity within diversity" or "the mystery of existence." It is not astonishing that this was not understood by painters; for them, form consisted in lighting on a surface and the composition of masses, and not in "metaphysical qualities."

Witkacy was undoubtedly one of the precursors of the philosophy of "existence," but although he introduced symbols and quasi-mathematical formulae into his argumentation, his language recalled that of the 19th-century spiritualists rather than that of the 20th-century's precise and technical philosophising. To the Marxists, to the Phenomenologists, and most of all to the Neo-Positivists, Witkacy's theories were "metaphysics": they were an accumulation of "empty" sentences which did not permit verification, *i.e.*, they were neither true nor false, and did not observe the formal rules of the manipulation of sentences. For philosophers, Witkacy was an interesting, sometimes fascinating amateur; for writers and men of the theatre, he was a painter who, as an amateur, dabbled in literature and the theatre.

Today, Witkacy is more and more often described as a "Renaissance man" and as one of the most universal of contemporary European minds. In his own time, despite the great spell and fascination which he exerted, he was considered a dilettante; he did not fit into the intellectual and artistic community which was divided into professions and ordered like an administration. At least within the Polish theatre, nobody scoffed at the pretensions of artists to super-humanity and independent morality with more force than Witkacy, But in life, especially for the benefit of his friends, Witkacy often very readily put on the mask of a demon. He proclaimed in his theory that modern art is more and more compelled towards perversion, which (translated into more normal language) meant the necessity of formal refinement and of shock-producing means of expression. In addition, he defended the right to perversion in life. This "demonism" which was so characteristic of many generations of the European Bohemia seemed, in the years between the two wars, frightfully old-fashioned.

AS A YOUNG MAN, Witkacy walked through the streets of Zakopane in a harlequin's costume; he liked to disguise himself until the end of his life. He adored all forms of social and intellectual provocation; he treated life as a game and a play; certainly he had much in common with Oscar Wilde. But now, from the perspective of a greater distance of time, it becomes obvious that although he practised life as a play, the genre of the play was tragedy.

Witkacy was or acted (the adopted mask is also the face) the role of an aristocrat of the spirit and the intellect, of a bohemian and, most rarely, of a dandy. All these personal patterns—of a liberated artist, of an artist at odds with society, of an artist misunderstood by the philistines—seemed in the inter-war period extremely "Nineteenth Century." The new personal pattern which was more and more generally adopted, especially in the period between the Spanish Civil War and the outbreak of World War II, consisted in conformism toward political movements and in the attitude of an "engaged writer." With all its naïveté the diagnosis of Julian Benda in his famous book, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, was basically accurate. Of course, the "engagement" was understood by intellectuals in various ways. Some considered that the function of a writer was that of Agitator; some, of an Ideologist; others thought, finally, that participation in the Power Apparatus or the preparation of a Revolution was the only important intellectual and moral experience of a 20th-century writer. The best examples of these attitudes were: the adherence of the majority of the French surrealists to the Communist Party; the partici-

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pation of André Malraux and many Anglo-American writers in the Spanish Civil War; Brecht's political and didactic theatre; and, on the side of the "Establishment," Jean Giroudoux as Minister and Paul Claudel as the French ambassador in the United States. Just as Witkacy did not fit into any of the professional compartments of intellectual and artistic milieux that were becoming more and more technical, so he did not fit into the division of the political Left and Right. Nor did he have any liberal illusions. His basic non-conformism resulted from various historical experiences and implied something different. Once again, this particular non-conformism diverged from the attitudes of his epoch. It occurred earlier, and it will occur later. Witkacy's non-conformism was probably closest to that of Blok, Shestov and of a large part of the pre-Revolutionary Russian intelligentsia. In his personal pattern, in the negation of the "Establishment" and of a model of civilisation, we find today the same type of non-conformism in the posture of Dylan Thomas, John Arden, and Allen Ginsberg.

THE MAIN ROAD of the Berkeley campus of the University of California ends at the intersection of two streets: Bancroft and Telegraph. On the same corner, I listen to a man with a hoarse voice and a middle-aged woman sing psalms every day at about noon. Next to them bare-footed girls and long-haired, dishevelled boys with strings of beads on colourful shirts sell the *Berkeley Barb*. At the same time, two hundred feet from the centre of the campus there is a square with a fountain between the Student Union and the wide, amphitheatrical steps of the administration building: here stand the tables of the various student groups and organisations. And here you can buy a little red booklet with Mao Tse-tung's thoughts, sign a protest against the war in Viet Nam, enrol in any number of political parties or in a sexual freedom league. Psychedelic leaflets with the same flowery, serpentine designs invite you to attend a Baptist service, to joint a nudist group, to take judo lessons, or to devote yourself to either Christian or Buddhist meditation. This little square on the Berkeley campus, where every day numerous scenes from Witkacy's plays are performed with few changes by young boys and girls who have never heard of their author, is one of the most sensitive barometers of the intellectual ferment of American youth. One can find similar squares, although perhaps less intense and colourful, on other American campuses also; and similar symptoms can be found in Swedish, English, and German universities.

The atmosphere of the Berkeley campus resembles most, I think, the Russian universities before the 1905 revolution. Not only was the long hair and beards of the boys and the short hair of the Russian female revolutionaries and suffragists similar, but also in summer the furs worn over shirts, trousers tucked into high boots or sandals on bare feet. Similar, also, was the principle of demonstrating abnegation and scorn for accepted forms by sartorial means. But all these similarities are not the most important. Each generation of artistic bohemia since Romanticism has performed some kind of a masquerade. The costume was like a uniform; it attested membership in a clan. The cape, just like the bowler of a London stockbroker, has been for a long time the uniform of the painter.

More important than clothes and hair-dos are the similarities of intellectual and ideological propositions. At the Russian universities at the beginning of our century, the followers of Tolstoy's belief in non-resistance to evil attempted to convince the apologists for terror that any form of violence is immoral. Socialists disputed with Anarchists the need for the political activation of the masses and scoffed at individual heroism as if it were without political significance. The Russo-Japanese War laid bare the weakness of Tsarist Russia. The old religions were coming back, and new ones were born; the adherents to Buddhist Nirvana tried to convince the Old Believers of the new light coming from the East. At the universities the causes of free love and equality of sexual rights for women were advocated; hashish was smoked, ether was inhaled, and the first drug mystics appeared. Most of the time they drank, of course, vodka. But it was a Slavic way of drinking vodka: full of passionate discussions, of "stripping one's soul," and intimate confessions: drunken nights like trips down to the bottom.

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AT THAT TIME Witkacy was at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow. Cracow's bohemia was meagre and provincial, but the Polish students who had gone to Russian universities violently radicalised somnolent Cracow and its artistic, "aesthetic" milieu. Witkiewicz saw the "naked soul" in its Russian version, an actual Apocalypse only ten years later: he was first a cadet in Pavlovski's regiment of the Tsar's bodyguard and then the political commissar of the revolutionised division.

All historical analogies are true only up to a point, and are only one means of interpretation. History does not repeat itself, or repeats itself each time in a different way; and if outlived social forms, as Marx wrote, die twice, first as tragedy, then as farce, the grotesque is always an apparent repetition of the tragic.

It is easier, however, to understand Witkacy's swerving from his time and the contemporaneity of his theatre—so striking today—if we compare even for a moment the ideological ferment of the 1960s with the Russian universities at the beginning of the century: the similar revolt against the Establishment by the children of the same Establishment, the contempt of the intellectuals for professional politicians, and the basic non-conformism of the artistic milieux.

IT MAY BE that in the United States, these similarities are especially emphatic and Witkacy's plays have not only their Polish or European contemporaneity but also their very special American relevance. I realised this while directing *The Madman and the Nun* at San Francisco State College last year. A few small changes in the references to books that had been read by the hero were sufficient to make him appear as an incarnation of an American beatnik shut up in an insane asylum after a "bad trip." He had been put there as a dangerous madman, but his madness was, in fact, simply protest, contempt, and hate for the society of satisfied and obedient men. The hero is a madman for the physicians: but truly mad are the physicians themselves, and the whole world is foolish.

If we consider the Theatre of the Absurd, the Theatre of Cruelty, and the Theatre of Happenings as the most significant theatrical phenomena of the '50s and '60s, it no longer presents difficulties to draw their historical genealogy. But this is true only today, because ten years ago the history of 20th-century European theatre seemed quite different. It was Martin Esslin who first drew the outline of this genealogy.

The origins of this modern theatre go back to the scandal at the opening night of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi* in Paris in 1896, to Wedekind's grotesque and demoniac tragedies, and (later on) to Strindberg's works, especially *A Dream Play* (1902) and *The Ghost Sonata* (1907).

The second stage of development comprises German Expressionist drama from Kokoschka, Yvan Goll, and Georg Kaiser to Brecht's early plays, the literary cabarets in Berlin and Munich, and the Dadaist *Cabaret Voltaire* in Zurich during the last years of World War I. The third, most important stage, was Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Alfred Jarry" (1926–1928), and the theatre of Witkiewicz who wrote almost all his plays between 1918 and 1925.

> LEON: "But let's not have any drama à la Ibsen, with all that tragedy business about the various professions and the shortcomings of each. I'd rather have a cold-soup tragedy or meat-with-all-the-juices-cooked-out-of-it tragedy à la Strindberg."
>
> MOTHER: "Nothing's sacred to you. You treat Ibsen and Strindberg just the same way you treat me. Is there any greater work of genius in the whole world than Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata*?"
>
> (Witkiewicz, *The Mother*, Act I.)[1]

One of the first plays performed in Artaud's theatre was Strindberg's *A Dream Play*. But even a very superficial analysis of Witkacy's *The Mother* and *The Water Hen* reveals that their author continues the destruction of naturalistic theatre exactly from the point where Strindberg stopped. The same was true for Artaud. In both Artaud's and Witkiewicz's plays, even before the body of a character who has died has time to cool down, he stands up and walks.

THERE IS A LONG theatrical history behind characters who, after their death, come back on stage in order to haunt living people or to give them moral lessons; this should become the subject of a separate book. The dead come back on stage both in Shakespeare and in Elizabethan drama, both in Romantic and Modern drama. The dead come back either as ghosts or as hallucinations. The ghost is a metaphysical statute; the hallucination is a psychological situation. But both imply, in the properly theatrical sense, that the ghost or hallucination can be seen only by some of the characters on the stage, that it

[1] Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, *The Madman and the Nun and other plays.* Translated and edited by Daniel C. Gerould and C. S. Durer. University of Washington Press, 1968.)

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behaves in a different way from the "living" characters, it speaks differently, it moves differently, it often wears the costume of a ghost or hallucination, and if it does not have a costume then it still must have some special traits or marks.

The theatrical tradition of the behaviour of ghosts was probably undermined for the first time by Strindberg. In *The Ghost Sonata* the dead Consul, wrapped in a winding sheet, comes out of the door of the house where he died the day before to look at the flag flying at half-mast and to count the poor who came to his funeral. Only the Student, however, sees him. A young girl, who many years ago Company Director Himmel had seduced and drowned, appears as a Milkmaid in the first scene; she does not speak, but she behaves normally. She even gives a cup of water to the Student. At the beginning only he sees her. The Milkmaid will, however, appear in the same act for a second time; she will raise her arms like one who is drowning and gaze fixedly at her murderer. The metaphysical statute of these apparitions is ambiguous in Strindberg's play; maybe they are ghosts, maybe only hallucinations. From the theatrical point of view, however, they no longer have other-worldly attributes.

But it is only in the plays with "corpses" of Artaud and Witkiewicz that the dead characters come back on stage in an ordinary manner. In *The Water Hen* the heroine who is shot in the first act comes back in the second act as if nothing had happened. In the third act, she is shot once again, but this time definitively. In *The Mother*, old Mrs. Eely dies in the second act. In the third act she lies in state, but it does not hinder her from appearing simultaneously as a person thirty years younger and, moreover, pregnant, expecting the birth of the hero of the play. The "first" Mother who is lying in state turns out to be a dummy. In *The Madman and the Nun* the corpse of a murdered psychiatrist, which had been removed by hospital attendants, comes back after a while, smiling, with the murderer who had hanged himself in the previous scene. His corpse is still on stage and is, of course, a dummy. The same thing happens in Artaud's pantomime, *The Philosopher's Stone*, where Harlequin, who was cut in pieces a moment ago by the jealous Doctor, jumps up from the operating table and immediately has sexual intercourse with the Doctor's wife, Isabella. After a while a baby is shaken out from her skirt who resembles the doctor as closely as two peas in a pod. The Harlequin who was tortured on the operating table was, of course, a dummy. The resemblance between Artaud's and Witkiewicz's plays which uses corpses is all the more surprising since Artaud could in no way have known Witkacy's plays. This theatricalisation of corpses is very important in the history of the contemporary, avant-garde theatre: the century-old convention of portraying the return of the dead in European theatre was completely broken.

IN THE CHINESE THEATRE, when the hero dies or is killed, he drops and lies flat for a moment and then runs off the stage. He died, thus he has ceased to exist, and consequently he cannot be present on the stage. For a European spectator this convention seems surprising at first, yet it does not lack theatrical logic. The actor acts the role of a character, but it is impossible to act the role of a corpse; at most it is possible to simulate it. But to simulate a corpse means, in theatrical language, to pass from the technical means of "acting" to the technical means of "pantomime." This only difference is that it is a pantomime with no gestures. After our performances and after the curtain calls, the corpses get up to bow before the audience; they might just as well have got up earlier.

Nor do the dead in the Japanese Nō theatre—the dead who return to haunt those who are alive, or to revenge themselves, or to reward their benefactors—follow the theatrical statute of a European "ghost." They behave, as far as I know, like characters who are alive, *i.e.*, according to the same theatrical convention of gestures and without any change in make-up. In the Bali theatre, ghosts and demons are represented as huge and lurid puppets. Artaud wrote this (in *The Theatre and Its Double*) about the Bali theatre:

> There is in the truly terrifying look of their devil (probably Tibetan) a striking similarity to the look of a certain puppet in our own remembrance, a puppet with swollen hands of white gelatine and nails of green foliage, which was the most beautiful ornament of one of the first plays performed by Alfred Jarry's Theatre.

The theatre in which the dead are puppets and in which the dead get up and walk—the theatre which breaks away from the convention of European drama—originated in the fascination with the Oriental theatre. Artaud experienced this fascination when he saw the Bali theatre during the colonial exposition in Paris. The Chinese opera and the Japanese Nō theatre fascinated Brecht, too. From the Oriental theatre Brecht adopted the ways in which the mask was used, symbolical make-up and pantomime elements in acting as the basic means of theatricalisation and of producing the effect of "alienation."

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WE DO NOT KNOW anything about Witkacy's theatrical experiences during the time when he travelled in Australia and Malaysia. It appears rather improbable, however, that when he accompanied Professor Malinowski to New Guinea in 1914 and passed through India, Ceylon, and the Malayan archipelago, Witkacy did not take an interest in or see any Oriental theatre. For a foreigner who does not know the language it is primarily a visual theatre, a theatre of gesture, costume and movement, a true theatre of Pure Form. But this theatre of Pure Form is at the same time a ritual and a liturgy. Artaud understood this theatre in exactly the same fashion, as pure spectacle and as ritual, and he opposed it to the deadness of European theatre. In his chapter on "Metaphysics and the Mise en Scène" (in *The Theatre and its Double*), Artaud wrote:

> In any case, and I hasten to say it at once, a theatre which subordinates the *mise en scène* and production, *i.e.*, everything in itself that is specifically theatrical, to the text, is a theatre of idiots, madmen, inverts, grammarians, grocers, antipoets and positivists, *i.e.*, Occidentals.

In its formulation, even in its style, choice of words and terms, this statement surprisingly resembles Witkacy's theories about the theatre of Pure Form.

"The last part of the spectacle," wrote Artaud about the Bali theatre, "is—in contrast to all the dirt, brutality, and infamy chewed up by our European stages—a delightful anachronism. And I do not know what other theatre would dare to pin down in this way as if true to nature the throes of a soul at the mercy of phantasms from the Beyond."

These "throes of a soul at the mercy of phantasms from the Beyond" are like expressions which Witkacy might have used, and they could characterise his painting and his theatre. Witkacy's theatre of Pure Form and Antonin Artaud's theatre of Cruelty were to serve as the last places where metaphysical experiences which had been banished from philosophy and which had become dead in religion could be expressed. Artaud wrote: "In our present state of degeneration it is through the skin that metaphysics must be made to re-enter our minds." But Witkacy would have said, "only through the perversion of form."

IT MAY BE the most significant that both in Witkiewicz and in Artaud we find the same infernal fusion, the same explosive combination of two notions or rather of two visions of the theatre. One of them is the theatre of ritual and liturgy, the theatre of metaphysical transports, the theatre in which—as Witkacy thought—the "Mystery of Existence" will shake even the unbelievers. Or, as Artaud wrote, which "will restore to all of us the natural and magic equivalent of the dogmas in which we no longer believe." The other is the theatre of violent physical action, the theatre in which gestures, words, movements and objects are not only a system of signs but they have their own pure theatrical value, just like a hieroglyph or Chinese ideogram which not only has a meaning but is an image as well.

In fact, these were two entirely different notions of theatre, although both in Artaud and in Witkiewicz they are tightly interlaced like two fibres in one cord. From the perspective of another quarter-of-a-century, it becomes clear that one of these visions of theatre was an illusion. The magic counterpart of dogma does not exist once you stop to believe in them. Ritual and liturgy in theatre is either provocation or profanation of ritual and liturgy. This very profanation of ritual we can find in the theatre of Jean Genet, who is the only one to draw all of the consequences from Artaud's theory of Cruelty.

In one of his rare moments of lucidity Artaud, however, was conscious of his illusion. In 1927 he wrote:

> It is certain that if I had created a theatre, what I would have done would have had as little relation to that which we are in the habit of calling "theatre," as the representation of some obscenity resembles an ancient religious mystery.

In the real theatre created by Witkiewicz, there are no metaphysical transports, nor is there any mystery of existence. And perhaps that is the reason why this theatre became understood so late. Witkiewicz' theatre is sometimes bitter, but always scoffing. The unquestionable greatness of this theatre consists in its historical perspective, in the perception of the end of his contemporary civilisation which was fatally theatened both by the egalitarian revolution coming from the East and by Western mechanisation. This mechanisation does not only produce a society of automatons but it impells the automatons to direct even those who had invented them. Witkacy's catastrophism only apparently belongs to the Nineteenth Century. In fact, it was the perspicacious and appalling vision of an inevitable clash between the Civilisation of Computers and the Levellers' Revolution. For Witkacy the Nineteenth Century ended once and for all in 1917. In this perspective, all that followed was grim and grotesque.

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EVADER: Have you gone out of your mind? To play cards at such a critical time?

FATHER: At our age it's the only way of whiling away the time during a social upheaval. What else could we do? Whist or auction bridge? "That is the question."...

TYPOWICZ: One club.

EVADER: Two clubs.

FATHER (*sitting down*): Two diamonds. (A red glare floods the stage and the monstrous boom of a grenade exploding nearby can be heard.) Banging away in fine style. Your bid, Mr. Widmower.

SPECTRE (*in a quivering, somewhat plaintive voice*): Two hearts. The world is collapsing. (Fainter red flashes of lightning and immediately afterwards two shells exploding a little further off.)

TYPOWICZ: Pass.

(Witkiewicz, *The Water Hen*, Act III.)

Until the outbreak of the second World War, Witkacy was understod only by a few. Perhaps because we were all still *before*, while he was already *after*.

Translated by Bogdana Carpenter

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George Seferis

Letter to Rex Warner

resident of Storrs, Connecticut, U.S.A.,
on his sixtieth birthday

At the time we met
you were telling the tale of the wild goose chase
in the kingdom of hermaphrodites;
there the football field
had known a shameless slaughter.
I was returning from a marble stadium
where the obstinate marathon runner, wounded,
saw the track sailing in blood.
That way I came to understand you and we became friends.

We were walking in a country ruined by the war,
where they'd crippled even the dolls of children.
The light, quick and strong,
bit into everything and turned it to stone.
We walked among
bicycles and kites,
we watched the colours but our talk
strayed to that restless horror.

Years went by and I found you again
on foreign soil, the vegetation luxuriant,
where poison ivy sometimes lies in wait
and studious children learn
to fathom wise books
and the labyrinth of love.
Your thoughts were always for Homer and his breed.
A squirrel—spasmodic circumflex—
climbed higher and higher up a giant tree
and you watched it
laughing.

Our life is always a separation
and a more difficult presence.

Now, among the tentacles of this great city,
I think about you once again.
Everything's television,
you can't touch things easily at close quarters.
In the heat of this electric night,
in loneliness unbreakable as the sea-floors,
the illuminated skyscrapers
show their windows gleaming
like the skin of a huge sea monster

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as it breaks clear above the surface.
The many-coloured crowd that filled them,
the measureless jostling crowd,
has moved on by this time
to other pleasures and other anxieties.
It emptied them, not a soul left behind,
like the multicelled nests of that sparrow
called philetairus
—PHILETAIRUS SOCIUS;
you find them in the thorny acacia
or in the museum, if you look for them.
"I grieve for the gourd"
murmured the prophet Jonah
gazing at the great city of Nineveh.
His words turn the mind
toward the wakeful dreams
it gathered during its daily labour:
bulls and horses with mouths wide-open
and tongues like sudden daggers;
an immigrant El Greco like the abyss of the resurrection
speaking a language
incomprehensible to everyone;
and that sculptor
who believed the sky was red
and struggled with the voracious space
that was chewing up the sculpture in his hands:
smaller and smaller still and thinner
to the point of nothingness.
The years have gone down deep
since the young man named Megacles,
with the athlete's oil flask hanging from his left hand,
went to offer Persephone so tenderly
the pomegranate he was holding
in his three fingers.

Now you are sixty
and I can't offer you anything
but this idle chirping.
Still, I feel that I'm encircled and goaded on
by a flock of philetairus sparrows.

New York, June '65—Princeton, N.J., winter '68.

Translated from the Greek by Edmund Keeley

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NOTE: *the lines following the reference to* PHILETAIRUS SOCIUS *recall impressions from various exhibits in New York during 1965, e.g., the Museum of Natural History, Guernica, etc. The sculptor mentioned is of course Alberto Giacometti; see his letter to Pierre Matisse (1947)—". . . J'avais acquis la conviction que le ciel n'est bleu que par convention mais rouge en réalité . . ." and "Une grande figure était pour moi fausse et une petite tout de même intolérable et puis elles devenaient si minuscules que souvent avec un dernier coup de canif elles disparaissaient dans la poussière" ("Alberto Giacometti," Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1965).*

G. S.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Peddling the Pornography of Violence

Further Thoughts on "Iniquity" — By PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON

THE PUBLIC has been exposed, through the mass media, to scenes of violence or sadistic sex for quite a long time, time enough, in fact, to begin to draw some tentative conclusions. Is there an effect? If so, what is it? When I wrote my book *On Iniquity*, designed to ask social questions which seemed to me to arise out of the Moors Murder trial, it was in the hope that it would provoke serious discussion with all participants keeping their voices down. I should have not have been so sanguine.

My post-bag was remarkable for its size and distribution of views: about 97% were with me, and of this figure only about 3% displayed the symptoms of the blue-nosed. Of the remaining 3% in opposition, 2% were obscene, unsigned, and usually both. It is obvious that the whole debate arouses the most furious emotions. As Dr. Fredric Wertham wrote (it was he who stemmed the flood of the worst horror comics in the United States), he found himself, when *A Sign for Cain* (1966) came out, accused of being "intemperate," "impassioned," "infuriated," and "vehement." This was the response I had myself from many "liberal intellectuals" (a poor phrase, since I am a fairly liberal intellectual myself, but I can't find a better one). On sound radio, I was bully-ragged by two people who should not have joined in the discussion at all, and who seemed incapable of understanding, such was their wrath, what I was trying to say. As someone else said, there are certain states of fury which make reading an impossibility. Certainly my pretty mild, question-asking book produced that effect upon some.

PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON, *whose most recent novels are "The Survival of the Fittest" (Macmillan, 1968), "Cork Street Next to the Hatter's," and "Night and Silence Who is Here?," published a controversial book, "On Iniquity: Some Personal Reflections Arising Out of the Moors Murder Trial" (Macmillan, 1967).*

On the matter of censorship, I repeat now what I said then—and, moreover, put in italics, so that even the most hostile might actually read the words: I did not want to see any more censorship, or any less, until the effect of violence and sadistic sex, *via* television, the cinema screen and (to a lesser extent) books, had been thoroughly investigated.

That was all. Not being ethically dead, of course I had my own opinion, which is that the "catharsis theory" doesn't work, and that the constant display of violence (I was not much interested in the display of unsadistic sexuality) on the two most important of the mass-media, was likely to corrupt.

Indeed, I now see less and less how it could be otherwise. If such publications have no effect upon the viewer, why on earth are business firms spending, on both sides of the Atlantic, millions upon advertising? So far as books go, the moment you state that they can do no harm, then you must also state that they can do no good: which is to put them absurdly into neutral gear. Books do have an effect, of course: leaving aside that unfinished one which sent Paolo and Francesca off to bed, there was a book called *Das Kapital* and another called *Mein Kampf*. Which will do to be going along with.

NOW WE HAVE TWO REPORTS to consider: one, the report by the Working Party set up by a Conference on the Obscenity Laws, under the chairmanship of the Arts Council in Britain:[1] and two, an American document entitled *Commission Statement on Violence in Television Entertainment Programmes* (under the chairmanship of Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower).

The second makes the first, in my opinion, look a flaccid document, Panglossian in its beaming optimism. Files of witnesses appeared before the Arts Council Committee, doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers, etc., each bringing with

[1] *The Obscenity Laws.* (André Deutsch, 1969), 30s.

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him a cornucopia of largely unsupported judgments. The Eisenhower report did not ask for opinions, but stated facts obtained from mass surveys, and is indeed far too factual to be accused of the "catharsis theory" bias so noticeable in the report of the Arts Council.[2]

One piece of bias stuck out like a sore thumb. It has always been stated that nobody ever complained of having been corrupted by a book —to quote the report,

> . . . it becomes less mysterious that nobody appears to find *in himself* an example of a person actually depraved by erotica. Nobody seems to have met such a person. Far more people claim to have seen a ghost.

But the Reverend David Sheppard, now Bishop of Woolwich, said that he "had not been unscathed by reading the book" (*Last Exit to Brooklyn*.) This was a brave statement on his part. At last, the ghost had been seen! But what, then, did the Committee do?

> In the event he impressed us deeply, but not as an awful example of depravity. On the contrary he left us with the feeling that, if this was a depraved man, this society had little to fear and much to gain from his multiplication.

These two quotations from the Report are characteristic of its prevailing flippancy. A nice young man, you see, but an awkward one. In fact, we don't believe what he was saying. Sweep him under the carpet. More *Last Exits*, more David Sheppards. What could be more desirable?

Then, there is the thoughtless comment. Of the Moors murderers—

> Analysis of their early life history shows that Brady had a typical background, in that he was illegitimate, had a reputation for cruelty before he was ten, and "always carried a flick knife."

So far, so good: at least, passable. But we read on:

> Hindley was brought up by her grandmother where she could stay out late and truant frequently from school.

Thus giving her an acceptable background for murder? Tush! In fact, the grandmother's home was only 200 yards from the mother's, the separation was made for reasons of space, and the girl was always in and out of both houses, being devoted to her infant sister. There was some mild record of truancy, but, so far as I know, none that she was persistently out late. And even if she had been? Truants who return home at 3 a.m. do not necessarily take to murdering small children. It would be far nearer the truth to say that she was corrupted by Brady, with whom she was wildly and masochistically in love. If she had never met him, she certainly would not have committed the crimes she did, in such a manner, and might have been a different woman. Not, perhaps, an agreeable one: but different.

This statement is by Dr. G. S. Barker who, while admitting Dr. Wertham's figures ("in one week, one station on American television showed 334 completed or attempted killings and the total channels in one city showed in one week 7,887 acts of violence and 1,087 threats of violence") goes on to proclaim: "Children should not be subject to saturation of violence as at present," but—"I personally would allow both so-called pornographic and sadistic literature in prisons. I believe it would relieve and not provoke tension." Belief, but no evidence, here. The suspicion is obvious: that such saturation may harm children, by no means relieving tension. Is it logical to pass from that suspicion to the concept that prisoners also, if offered sadistic literature, may not, after all, find tensions not relieved but worsened?

On violence, the British report runs as follows:

> We had some sympathy when Mr. Trevelyan, who agreed in regarding erotica as socially harmless, confessed to feeling "not quite so sure" about the depiction of violence. This could well be due simply to the fact that most people . . . don't like violence and do like sex. But a majority must resist the temptation to prohibit whatever it happens to dislike and be guided instead by social consequences if they are calculable.

It sounds all right, until it is realised that the Working Party did *not* find the social consequences of violence "calculable," so were not prepared to do anything about such hard evidence as was later produced by the Eisenhower report. Mr. Halloran, whose views are not so committed as those of others, does believe that the constant exposure to violence may have a "desensitising effect," although he made it clear that this was "no more than speculation." Now, as Dr. Wertham points out, you cannot prove moral harm as you can prove a proposition in physics or biology: therefore it is necessary to "speculate" on some kind of informed basis.

[2] It is fair to state at this point that Lord Goodman was hoping for the reform of the Obscenity Laws, and not the demand for total repeal.

IN MY OWN DEBATES with many people on the subject of violence or sadistic sex, I have inevitably found that though I am accused of

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making assumptions, they have already made theirs and are not really prepared to listen to argument which discounts the "catharsis theory" at all. Yet, in *On Iniquity*, my own assumptions were few, though I asked a good many questions and did not attempt to conceal my partial bias in doing so.

> A man can at least know in his heart whether he is guilty of embezzling; he cannot possibly know whether he is guilty of depraving and corrupting. *Arts Council Report*

Oh, yes, he can. What about the combine of New York journalists who wrote (as a hoax) a novel deliberately to out-pornograph the pornographers? What about the contributors to, say, the pre-war *London Life*?

Then, there is some pretty wild confusion of double-thinking.

> Custom and acceptance are the great anti-aphrodisiacs. Nothing could be more antiseptic sexually than a nudist colony.

I gasp and stretch my eyes. So that is what the permissive society has been up to all along—to provide anti-aphrodisiacs! Could any project be duller?

The Report itself concludes:

> We would leave intact the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act, 1955.

Good. But this must lead, surely, to the proposition that children can be harmed but adults cannot, whatever the mental age of the latter.

In the Reports on Discussions, Lord Annan writes:

> In any case it was difficult to argue that the author's "intention" had any direct bearing on the excellence or worthlessness of a work of art. The criteria of "art" or "good taste" were equally difficult to apply.

But surely not impossible. I am myself in full agreement with Professor Harry S. Levin who thinks that it is not, and that we are perfectly used to sorting out the rubbish from the rest. If we were not, a good deal of the purpose would have departed from the practice of criticism.

Dr. Anthony Storr makes reference to the active investigation into violence on television then in progress in the United States and to a forthcoming visit from Professor Berkowitz to this country. He himself cannot be convinced that even the literature of drug-taking—say, the encouragement to take heroin—would play a major part in causing addiction:—"though it might certainly play a minor contributory role." Would that minor role, then, be nothing? The risks people are prepared to take because they cannot get mathematically exact answers to their questions scare me stiff. Further, does Dr. Storr really believe that a combined effort by propagandist writers couldn't have a major effect? Or that a TV programme advertising heroin would be pointless? Why should heroin, in this case, be different from Quaker Oats?

As Dr. Wertham has written:

> To use the term *catharsis as* a justification for media mayhem is at best a misunderstanding. Neither Aristotle nor Frantz Fanon meant it that way.... Do we give a child an erector set so that he will get rid of his interest in real construction, or a chemistry set so that he gets out of his system his natural bent for science?

He has observed, furthermore, that if approached by teenagers on a dark night he would prefer that they had not seen *Bonnie and Clyde*. On this point, the Eisenhower Report backs him.

> The vast majority of experimental studies on this question [*i.e.*, the "drain-off," or catharsis theory] have found that observed violence stimulates aggressive behaviour rather than the opposite. Moreover, the stimulation of aggression responses from exposure to filmed aggression is more likely to occur when the witnessed aggression occurs in a justified, rather than an unjustified, context.

Which means, the goodies killing the baddies.

But let us work through this report, making clear its salient findings.

UNLIKE the British Arts Council report, the American Commission's statement is serious throughout in tone and is quite unrelieved by little jokes.

1. "Some of these studies" (testimony presented in hearings before the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency in 1955, 1961, and 1964) "counted the number and kinds of violent acts on television, finding, for example, in a week of television watching in New York City in 1953, an average of 6·2 acts or threats of violence per one-hour programme. Another study in 1962 compared the occurrence of 'aggressive episodes' to the occurrence of 'protective and affectionate behaviour,' finding a four to one ratio of assault to affection."

No, it hasn't happened here yet—not quite, though we have our moments. I complained to a young woman of my acquaintance about an episode in *Wojeck*, where a man slaps a girl about the face till she falls down bleeding, squirts a soda-siphon at her to bring her round and then, if my memory serves me, starts again. The young woman pooh-poohed my concern.

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"You see," she said, "*it was all right in the context.*"

2. "Cartoon programmes comprised only about ten per cent of the total hours of dramatic programmes, but they were almost entirely concentrated in the children's programmes on Saturday morning. Almost all the cartoon programmes contained violence, and the rate of violent episodes was quite high in both years—more than twenty per hour."

It is a good many years since I wrote to *The Times* on the subject of a Tom and Jerry cartoon, in which a dog, strapped in a chair, had all his teeth deliberately smashed to pieces. Tom and Jerry cartoons seem to have improved a little with time, at least, those we are shown on television here.

3. "Violent encounters on televised drama, unlike violent encounters in real life, are rarely between intimates. They generally occur at close range between young to middle-aged single males who, half the time, are strangers to each other. Six times out of ten, the violent acts involve the use of weapons: equally often, the act evokes no counter-violence from the victim."

It is well known that crime itself is imitative: "three laws" on the Imitation of Crime were first propounded by Gabriel Tarde in 1847. If we can judge by the rising figures of crimes of violence against the person, both in America and in this country, it would seem fairly obvious that simulated crime is imitative also—especially when (as the Eisenhower Report remarks) television crime serials are often believed by people of low intelligence to be "real": these people make no distinction between fictional and actual violence.

4. "Those who commit acts of violence more often perceive them to be in their self-interest than in the service of some other cause. Nearly half of all the leading characters who kill . . . achieve a clearly happy ending in the programme. To this extent, violence is portrayed as a successful means of attaining a desired end."

The report goes on to point out how this violence is romanticised, since "physical pain—details of injury and death—is shown to be a consequence of violence in only one out of every four violent acts. In television drama violence does not hurt too much, nor are its consequences very bloody or messy, even though it may lead to injury or death."

Therefore the act of violence may be imitated in real life, without the perpetrators having any very clear idea of what it really means in terms of pain, messiness, murder or manslaughter. At this point the report turns to the effect of television violence, starting the section by asking why advertisers should every year spend $2½ billion in the belief that television can affect

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human behaviour, if in fact it does not. I have raised this point earlier. It seems to me incontrovertible.

5. "Some defenders of violence on television, however, contend that viewers 'drain off' aggressive tendencies by their vicarious participation in violent media programmes.... Laboratory experiments on the reactions of adults and teenagers to violent film content provides little support for this theory. In fact, the vast majority of experimental studies on this question have found that observed violence stimulates aggressive behaviour, rather than the opposite.... Violence on television encourages violent forms of behaviour, and fosters moral and social attitudes about violence in daily life which are unacceptable in civilised society. We do not suggest that television is a principal cause of violence in society. We do suggest that it is a contributing factor."

Well, this is temperate enough. The writers of the report are not unduly discouraged: they can point already to a recent favourable trend towards less violent programmes which is already showing itself in the U.S.A.: and about time too.

WE MAY PASS FROM the two reports now to more general considerations. A question was asked by Professor Samuel Hynes, of North-Western University, Illinois (*Evening Standard*, 28 July 1969) which has not been asked before. *Cui bono?* If we totally abolish the censorship laws in general, to whose good will it be? Surely we cannot seriously believe that by doing so we should embark upon a therapeutic enterprise, beneficial to all. Simply because we do not know enough yet about cause and effect, we should be doubly careful what changes we introduce. The "success" of the Danish experiment—it is claimed that with free-for-all pornography the sales of such material has dropped (though quite why ultimately permissive persons regard this as "success" is mysterious to me)—needs some looking at in the light of October's Pornographic Fair. This appears to have attracted gigantic crowds of young Danes, exactly as we would expect.

Again, Professor Hynes writes:

> Another possible consequence of repeal is even less cheering. One of the witnesses, a psychiatrist, testified that "saturation" of television with scenes of violence must condition children to take life cheaply. He did not offer what seems a reasonable correlative, that saturation with sex might condition children to take physical love cheaply.

Quite so. And when we look around us, at the enormous pressures to be sexy, trendy, naked, joyously promiscuous, it is obvious that many of our children can and do take physical love cheaply. They see quite clearly that their elders, the publicists, regard it as a cheap thing. Though the display of violence is my main preoccupation, I am in agreement with Dr. George Steiner[3] when he inveighs against the invasion of our sexual privacy.

The craze for nudity, for making love in public on the screen and now, I suppose, on the stage, is of course puerile. *Dr. Faustus* at Stratford was thrown quite out of balance by the obvious interest in the audience to see a naked Helen toddle across the stage. Neither the body nor its sexual activities should be held cheaply, and this kind of display is only too often a cheapening thing. I have said in blither moments that I should like to see all plays in all theatres performed in stark nakedness for a month, so that we might get this particular silliness out of our systems. *The Mousetrap* might even increase its bookings.

Dr. Fredric Wertham claims that we do know far more about the effects of violence than we are claiming to, and in the light of rising crime figures I am sure now that he is right.

> Actually we are confronted in the mass media with a display to *children* of brutality, sadism and violence such as the world has never seen before. At the same time there is such a rise of violence among our youth that no peace corps abroad can make up for the violence corps at home.

But are we, then—an old cry—to tailor our display for the benefit of children? I would suggest that it is not realised how many adults *are* children, especially the illiterate and the poorly-read. Not that I am naïve enough to believe that all literate and well-read persons are incorruptible. The person who says, "It doesn't hurt *me*, therefore it can't hurt you," is a kind of intellectual snob.

> The test [Dr. Wertham continues] of science is prediction. On the basis of my studies I predicted *fifteen years ago* that more and more brutal violence would be committed by younger and younger age groups. This was met then with disbelief. Now it is common knowledge. We are raising a generation of violence-worshippers.

Yes, and raising ugliness all round us. No beauty, terrible or otherwise, is being born. Soho is a nightmare of ugliness, and so is the façade of many a cinema. We are offering the spectacle of a great number of perversions to people for

[3] "Night Words: High Pornography and Human Privacy," ENCOUNTER, October 1965.

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whom it is all new and *shocking*—witness the use of the word "shocking" in film and book advertisements, to attract the customer. There are those who claim that being "shocked" is good for us, startling us out of our complacency. What impudence! Again, intellectual impudence and snobbery, the cult of "we" and "they." What nonsense it is to regard an entire theatre-audience as "complacent"! What have most of us to be complacent about, in this rocking world of wars and starvation? I deplore the tendency for actors to go around insulting, or literally prodding, audiences; this is mere, mindless cheek. It is the apogee of the absurd mass-assumption which has come to us along with our new and doubtful freedoms.

As I HAVE SAID, the figures in this country as well as in the U.S.A. of crimes of violence against the person are rising. To ignore these figures is crass, as crass as to glance at them and say that they don't mean anything. Of course they mean *something*: any noticeable trend in statistics always does. Therefore it is foolish to campaign for more and more new "liberties" until we begin to see what the effects are of those we have, and all that needs is a little patience. Like greedy children, we are clamouring that what we want we must have *at once*.

I have said in *On Iniquity* that there is nothing especially "left wing" about the demand for more violence and pornography. One has only to observe the social mores of Russia and China to see that. They may be, to our eyes, detestably restrictive: but the fact that they do have restrictions is not in any doubt at all. And they are left-wing countries, are they not?

I also implied that the Theatre of Cruelty was one of the nastiest ideas that man has come up with. It implies, of course, violence: psychological or actual. Can anyone tell me (I read the mass-circulation Sunday papers) when a baby was rolled in its own excreta and stoned to death by yobs in a park? Or is this pure fantasy? If it is fantasy, it is an ugly one for public display. And if it is not fantasy—*cui bono*? Not that I take the theatre as seriously as I take television or cinema as a social force: it is very far from being a mass medium. Still, that's the way the wind blows. The old excuse comes up—it is all to help us to face up to life. But suppose it isn't—as yet— life? I am aware that Mr. Edward Bond, to whom I have been referring, could have taken plenty of tales from the *faits divers* of our own newspapers. Yet to the best of my knowledge he has not: so he is presumably playing out a fantasy and trying to rub our

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noses into fantasticised horror. We have horrors enough of our own.

A WORD ON "clean-up campaigns." They may at times be roughly on the right lines, but are too prone to use their sledgehammers to crack nuts. I remember them coming into action over one of those weepy TV plays about a hapless homosexual who went about crying in the back garden. It wasn't a very good play, but it was really quite inoffensive. No, I want to see a tighter hand, on television and cinema, upon orgies of violence and cruelty. I am not so interested in sexual display, unless it is sexually-sadistic, though I have suggested that in excess its effect is cheapening: and I cannot for the life of me see that orgiastic violence would be beneficial to anyone. To whose benefit could it possibly be?

What we are asking for is the backlash, which, if it comes, may be as ugly as anything we have created for our own delectation. It is that which I want, by the general exercise of self-control, to avoid. We saw a hint of it in the street scenes outside 144 Piccadilly, and we don't want to see it again; but we shall, if we don't watch out.

The "general public" always lags behind the generous action, and if it had been taken into account we should not have had the short-term repeal of capital punishment, nor the laws which have softened life for the homosexual. But the "general public" has never been so constantly blared at, on either issue, as it is being blared at now on a multiplicity of others. The wind of change is inescapable, and if it smells like exploding excrement, some people may think of trying to alter the direction of the weather-vane.

I HAVE NOT kept my voice down, and I regret it. But I am sure we are going too fast and too far, in our demand for total liberty of communication. Society insists on its own safeguards: upon the drug laws, for instance, whether these cover pot or heroin. It does not guarantee freedom to the burglar, or to the embezzler, or to the murderer. And we do not doubt that it is right for society to be in control, unless we have an anarchic vision that without the law all men would be good and sweet.

What is to be done? It seems to me that we now have enough evidence, statistical and clinical, to know that we are doing wrong. So far as sex is concerned, we have let sexual pornography go so far that it would be hard to stop it continuing its seedy exercise. But where the pornography of violence is concerned, we should back-pedal. The doing of this must, of course, be left to the BBC, ITA, the producers of plays and films, the publishers of books. Easier said than done? Certainly. Violence has a ravishing attraction for many people unlikely to be on the receiving end of the reality. It is easily equated with virility, where it is not an actual substitute for it. Still, if we start thinking in the right way, we may start doing the right thing for our rickety society. As a beginning, we ought at least to stop acting upon optimistic assumptions for which there is no basis whatsoever. In any case, we need again to look seriously at the "Catharsis Theory," and see whether it is not merely an optimistic metaphor.

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BOOKS & WRITERS

Black, Red & White

On a Spectrum of Controversy — By DAVID MARTIN

THE TWO "Black Paper" collections of short pieces by Cox and Dyson[1] are addressed to influential people in order to help save the traditional notion of education; *Student Power*[2] is about the redemption of thought and how to disrupt the citadels of false consciousness in the University. There is therefore some disparity of aim as well as of politics. In the former case it is not always easy to see the criteria of inclusion, except that they all connect with the heading of the Introduction to Black Paper No. 1 "Progressive Collapse." In the latter case the criteria are clear: everything is connected to everything else so nothing is really irrelevant. Colonialism, boredom, linguistic philosophy, war, schizophrenia, bureaucracy—all are due to capitalism.

The aims of Black Paper No. 1 are as follows. We must maintain standards, accept intellectual discipline, and refuse to pander to the wayward arrogance of a pampered youth. A University exists to do research and to transmit knowledge; a school is a place of learning rather than a temple of self-expression. Current troubles can only lead in the end to more state intervention in universities, police maybe, and certainly ignorant intruders like the Prices & Income Board brandishing their irrelevant yardsticks of "productivity." Intellectual excellence and self-discipline are assisted by examinations which are, after all, partly tests of professional competence. If students like desultory reading or want communitarian therapy and/or revolutionary activism then they are entitled to have them, but such things do not require universities or public money. Nor do universities require the presence of that celebrated non-subject sociology—which Robert Conquest oddly likens to courses in water-skiing at the University of Florida.

Conquest's remark does suggest the merits and demerits of the *Black Paper*. It is, for instance, occasionally funny, which can hardly be said of its red rival. Conquest also reminds us that the clash of "repressed" youth with "those beetle-browed thugs Professor X and Mr. Y" is a richly comic invention. (As one Student Leader put it to me: "The trouble is there is *no* authority around here—the place is dying of democracy gone mad.") The *Black Paper* is also commendably resolute in rejecting those vague sentimentalities supposedly validated by research, or by the practices of some populist institution in Minnesota which form the pabulum of forward educational thinking. It even dares use words like "immaturity" and "cheating" without embarrassment. Whatever next? (We'll be referring to student pamphlets as "lies" before long.) But it has no context, in short, almost no "sociology." It describes without analysing the social background, and shows irritation without wider understanding. Bryan Wilson's article is the main exception. His arguments will madden all those who think sociology must show the folly or irrelevance of traditional values and confirm all those who regard it as a tattered cloak thrown over bourgeois interests. Bryan Wilson points to generation conflict rather than to class conflict, to the prejudice against age and the disdain of seniority, to the spread of "the fun ethic" and "entertainment values." For him the dislocations of expansion have weakened the capacity of tradition to reproduce itself, either amongst students or amongst some younger academics. The values of productivity have partly eroded those criteria of intellectual enrichment which might more easily and properly have evoked their loyalty. Furthermore, the intimate social contours of college life have become large grey unknowns in which suspicion runs riot. And behind the banners and the idealism "lurks self-interest and wounded hopes" as well as the search for meaning and identity.

Unfortunately, there is much to be said for this approach. Anyone who has discussed for as

[1] *Fight for Education*. Two Black Papers. Edited by C. B. Cox and A. E. DYSON. Critical Quarterly Society, 5s. and 10s. 6d.

[2] *Student Power*. Edited by A. COCKBURN and R. BLACKBURN. Penguin, 7s.

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long as I have with revolutionary students must be aware that their large ideological talk serves as a convenient excuse for rudeness, as a pretext for arrogant posturing and as a licence for intermittent carnival, plus the added bonus of exposure in the mass media. Bryan Wilson's refusal to accept the banners at their face value (who said sociology only goes for the appearance?) directs our attention to the sheer petulant fractiousness behind the bulk of their day-to-day clamour. The complaints about the Universe and about the Coffee-machine, and the technique of wearing out liberals by playing on the weak structure of authority and on donnish scruples is reminiscent of the tactics of the spoilt child. He makes everybody's life a burden, works the system entirely for his own convenience, and then claims he is the Victim. As one militant sympathiser at last confessed: "They are insatiable. . . ."

In the second *Black Paper* the broad attacks of the first are documented and the universities are relegated to a more subordinate role. The argument turns partly on the preservation of the grammar schools and partly on the use of "progressive" (or "discovery") methods.

Reading the paper and its counter-blast "Verdict on the Facts" (edited by Brian Jackson and Beryl McAthlone for ACE) one can't help but be disquieted at the extent to which one is offered a package deal by both sides of the debate. What can anyone say who is cautiously in favour of comprehensive schools and who applauds certain types of progressive method provided they do not exclude the necessary formal elements? Curiously enough the *Black Paper* would offer such a person a wider range of option than the ACE pamphlet, which presents a characteristic syndrome of opinion offered for general acceptance without admitting that one may dislike selection at 11, suspect certain elements in the instructional methods of the grammar schools, yet also wish to distinguish carefully between a legitimate authority (which guides and supports) and mere authoritarianism, and generally desire to assess each area of concern independently. That, at least, is my own position. So far as examinations go I want some relatively objective test, which is why I am against continuous assessment by teachers; I do not want to replace the occasional examination by continuous appraisal with an increased subjective component. So far as methods are at issue I would want to see how they work out in various contexts. As June Wedgewood Benn points out in the *Black Paper*, we must separate the issues of methods, of higher education and student unrest, and of "going comprehensive." There is also the explosive issue of moral education (which the *Black Paper* editors wisely skirt) and the complicated matter of teacher training, not to mention the crucial questions of teachers' morale and competence in non-teaching skills. Far too little attention has been given to training for the special *administrative* problems of comprehensives, to their need of "cabinet government," and to the criteria of selection for senior posts.

Much of what I would wish to say relates to this question of morale, since it is distinctly my impression that morale is sometimes low, and where this is so progressive methods are a useful smokescreen to mislead anxious parents. The parent who looks at his children's books and is fascinated by the unruly rubbish therein is told he was brought up in the "dark ages" of education and cannot hope to penetrate the creative excitement which lies behind the apparently footling inadequacies of the actual work (even though the creative excitement has not been quite enough to persuade his teacher to look at it). But more of that below: both *Black Paper* and ACE pamphlet are partly anecdotal and I perforce must be the same: although my experience is simply that of a trained primary school teacher, a university teacher, and a parent.

I should say straight away that, having taught children myself, I by no means feel in a position to criticise school teachers unreservedly. It is an extraordinarily exacting profession and one which I left without a sigh. Unfortunately it is the one profession where competence in the *teaching* aspect—except at the margin—is not acquired by instruction. Teaching cannot be taught, and my experience of a college of education was that they did not waste too much time trying. Teaching provides the prime instance of the discovery method, of knowledge by experience, and the experience is often rather painful, partly because a fair number of teachers go into the schools not out of talent or commitment but *faute de mieux*. It is the uncomfortable but least bothersome refuge of many an amiable drone. For such the mystique of progressive flexibility is a linguistic camouflage for careless disorganisation. Of course if progressive methods can be shown to work only with the best teachers, and if comprehensive modes of organisation positively encourage disintegrating morale, then a wider range of doubt is involved than simply the condition of the teaching profession. Certainly comprehensives sometimes lack the *esprit de corps* (even, on occasion, the self-respect) of the grammar school, but on the whole I'm inclined to put a fair amount down to the pangs of transition. How the variable impact of all the different factors involved can be summed up is, in any case, beyond my comprehension. One uses one's information largely to back one's hunches

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and one's prejudices. To be sure, both sides claim "research" is on *their* side. But as a practising sociologist I can only say that in very little research do the facts unambiguously imply what they are supposed to imply. They may mean this or that according to how you interpret adventitious factors in a much wider context than that actually under review. In the past, fools supported their opinions by the assertion "all history shows—"; nowadays fools document their prejudices with the assertion "recent research conclusively proves. . . ."

RESEARCH IS, all the same, preferable to anecdotes, but anecdotes can sometimes illustrate a point, and the curious tale of my own son's education provides me with ammunition to suspect both selection at 11 and certain aspects of progressive methods. (Local and unrepresentative it may be but I meet too many parents with identical experiences to suppose it is entirely peculiar to the area in which I happen to live.) Indeed the writers of the ACE pamphlet admit widespread disquiet, though they call it "bewilderment," in order to suggest that it is largely due to lack of information. Some of us are not so uninformed as the patronising tone of the enlightened would suggest.

Unlike the children of so many of my progressive friends, my son actually goes to a state comprehensive school, and a short while ago I had the interesting experience of having to look after his education personally while abroad. The school very kindly provided me with the necessary textbooks—in those areas where "texts" still existed—and I set about the task. (I may say in parenthesis that this was a good school, not neglecting its lower ability pupils in order to ape the grammar school, and maintaining a very good Sixth Form even though deprived of "the cream.")

The new Nuffield Mathematics appealed to me as immensely superior to the mathematics I failed to learn at my own school. What I did discover, however, was that my son, at thirteen, knew almost no basic computational skills (*e.g.* simple division) or the difference between a fraction and a decimal. This was partly an indictment of his primary school, but it also seemed his present teachers were not aware of this lack, or had not thought it worthwhile apprising me of it. In French I already knew that after six months regular teaching, he had heard neither of *avoir* nor *être*, let alone, of course, the notion of an infinitive. He had acquired at that time—or later—no transferable skills, no sense of that structure around which knowledge can be built, and at times he did not even recognise a written word simply because it was known only in the context of the

A Soul in the Quad

KATHLEEN NOTT

'Miss Nott, who is a philosopher by training and a poet and novelist by vocation, has written a breezy work of polemics which might be loosely described as a defence of the traditional liberal-humanist view of man. Her principal target is the quasi-behaviourist view of man which dominates large areas of the social sciences. Miss Nott is, in short, a vehemently independent writer, totally unaffected by fashionable reputations, and with a certain Orwellian directness in her approach.'—BERNARD BERGONZI, *New Society* 63s

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language laboratory. In short, far from initiating him into *principles* (such as was clearly the object of the Nuffield Mathematics) he had a phrase-book knowledge, woodenly applicable only in the most limited contexts. At the time when it became necessary for me to teach him, progress was still so slow that no sense of cumulative achievement was possible, let alone any awareness of a cumulative hierarchy of skills. Yet by giving him only the normal quota of French lessons (admittedly on a personal basis) and initiating him into the pleasures of problem-solving through the application of rules, he was reading fourth-year grammar-school texts with ease in the course of fourteen weeks. Understanding had replaced free association.

This narration has a simple but crucial point: progressive methods are more developed, or work better, in some contexts than others, and should rarely be relied on to the exclusion of formal teaching. And this is what Professor Bantock, in the most distinguished essay in the *Black Paper*, says: "Used competently these new methods have a great deal to offer. Used incompetently . . . they are probably more disastrous to learning than reliance on the old formal methods." If united to a philosophy of educational *laisser faire* (or mere laziness) and to the setting of homework so infrequently and unsystematically as to arouse resentment that any should have been set at all, they are clearly a passport to effortless inferiority. Yet this does *not* mean we need return to the routine of mere note-taking or the rigidities and compartmentalism of many traditional grammar schools. Those institutions no more produced people who could *think* (as distinct from executing exercises through conventional intellectual hoops) than does an exclusive concentration on "the play way."

This is what some of the *Black Paper* contributors ignore, and it connects unhappily with their dislike of sociology (not to mention their egregious ignorance of it). Oddly enough sociology is what happens when you stop *learning* history or *acquiring* moral rules and start to think about both. That a great number of people do it in an immature way is not surprising; after all, a great deal of what passes for history is bunk too. Sociology, like history, contains such a great deal of bunk not because it is easy but because it is difficult and involves thinking, an activity in which neither the more traditionally minded grammar school nor the bogus progressives sold on "creativity" have much interest. For the former it would open the door to general ideas; for the latter it would put logic and order into the operations of the vagrant imagination.

WE NEED TO ASK why it is that bogus progressives achieve such éclat in our contemporary society. What is the power of O.K. thinking? It is not a question to be answered in a paragraph. Partly, of course, there is the itch to crackpot activism: If something is in actual operation and even working, it is high time to change it. Partly there is the impact of what can only be called "Sneer and Smear Cultures" (to contrast with what Professor Baroja called "Honour and Shame Cultures"). In parts of the progressive middle class sneering has gone beyond a technique employed occasionally in self-defence and has become a way of life. Increasingly it is supplemented by the smear, which has been brought to a remarkable degree of obscene refinement by young idealists in our universities. Anyone who disagrees at any point with this prescribed syndrome of O.K. opinion (who, in short, wants to think independently) is labelled as part of "the backlash," or, to take my own case, as a "fascist-liberal." (Amis and Conquest describe how one critic actually went so far as to call them —Christians!) As for the O.K. militant, he fears nothing more than a wrong label on himself: it might push him out into a wilderness of real social heresies as distinct from the comfortable conformity of the radical hive. It is this warm buzz of progressive complacency which gives rise to what Edward Boyle wittily describes as an "ugly backlash from moderate, unfanatical, middle-of-the-road opinion."

Where is this "backlash" of the moderate, tolerant, middle-of-the-roader to be socially located? Partly it is among those scholarship boys who identify with a system which was so perspicacious as to choose *them*. They suspect that the standards of excellence which they first encountered through the grammar school will no longer hold once its institutional frame is destroyed. They also suspect (with far more reason) that the Labour Party will destroy the institutions of the bright upper working-class and the solid middle citizenry while leaving alone the schools of the very rich (after all, it may be argued, Eton has gone comprehensive already). In this last suspicion I fear they may be right.

IN COMMENTING above on the first *Black Paper* I referred to the tactics of the spoilt child so popular among students. *Student Power* recognises that it is faced with a problem in mobilising this infantilism into a coherent force: somehow one needs to throw a Marxist cloak over what is, in part, a generational gripe. The advantage of such a cloak is that it has been woven without seam throughout so that all the ills of mankind are brought to the door of Capitalism and Bureaucracy.

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An alert student leadership can show the concealed systematic relationship between sexual controls, university authoritarianism, economic exploitation and imperialist aggression.

Determined revolutionaries are themselves aware that however easy it may be to play on vague suspicions and half-informed disgruntlement, it is less easy to build so evanescent a phase into a disciplined revolutionary thrust, unless other cooperating factors are present. Hence the inevitable references in some articles to the need to awake the Sleeping Beauty of the English working class.

However, most of the book is about the University. Carl Davidson is required reading for the techniques of destroying the major educational institutions of the West *by avoiding compromise and reform*. Tom Fawthrop's piece on examinations is worth reading in conjunction with C. B. Cox's "In Praise of Examinations" in the *Black Paper*.[3] Triesman exhibits shock and contempt over the activities of the C.I.A.; Fred Halliday provides an overall view of international student activity; Linda Tinkham writes sensibly about "the women's place" in colleges of education, while Tom Nairn and Jim Singh-Sadhu provide an illuminating survey of the art college situation. David Adelstein runs through familiar material on inequalities in the educational system, dilates on the iniquity of the binary system, and ends with a demand for consumer power: the transient consumers of the university "product" should capitalise on adolescent inexperience to control the permanent life situation of those who have made scholarship a vocation. (He doesn't put it *quite* like that.)[4]

Perhaps the two most interesting essays are Robin Blackburn's "Brief Guide to Bourgeois Ideology" and Perry Anderson's "Components of the National Culture"—to utilise their offensive phrase about Karl Popper, they are both of them "fluent ideologues." To begin with Blackburn: where Conquest sees sociology as the selective documentation of a leftist prejudice, he sees it as the veil drawn across bourgeois social reality. Maybe it is sometimes both

[3] On p. 324 Halliday seems to approve the following useful idea from China's cultural revolution: students set their own examinations with the approval of teachers, whereupon the teachers write model answers. Students compare their answers with the model, and then vote on the results.

[4] For a short compendium of the contradictions in a book whose favourite word is "contradiction," see Christopher Ricks, "Student Thought," in *The Listener*, 13 March 1969.

MILOVAN DJILAS

For criticism of the Party: 3 years
For writing **The New Class**: 7 years
For writing **Conversations with Stalin**: 4 years

THE UNPERFECT SOCIETY
Beyond the New Class

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and most often neither. By extensive quotation out of context he aims to show how bourgeois sociology is managerial and operational in its tendency, uncritical in its perspectives, bogus and stifling in its rigour, refusing all fundamental structural vantage-points and embracing the common-sensical appearance rather than the dialectical essence. He takes a semi-justified swipe at the vocabulary and assumptions of social equilibrium theory, and claims that revolutionary movements are characterised as structural strain and stigmatised as irrational, particularly by the use of a term like "charismatic." (Yet precisely this question as to how far it is right to employ the terms rational and irrational is debated within sociology, *e.g.*, Jarvie's *The Revolution in Anthropology*.) All contrary possibilities are ignored by bourgeois sociology as excluded by the limitations of social action *per se* (rather, that is, than by the specific limitations of the capitalist system). The really significant alternatives are avoided by linking Fascism and Communism in the single odious category of "totalitarian." Sociologists try to make up for a boring restricted political style and non-participatory public life by idealising the family as "a little democracy," the main evidence cited for this being some articles in the London *Evening Standard*.

READING BLACKBURN ONE MIGHT not realise that for every tendency cited there is a contrary tendency, and that his broader criticisms are the small change of every bourgeois seminar. Moreover, it is no more plausible that sociologists should ignore the possibility of revolution in Asia, Africa, and Latin America than that Herbert Marcuse should ignore the possibility of no revolution in "the West." And, after all, one of the most functionalist analyses is precisely that provided by Marcuse himself when he pessimistically notes the incorporation of the working class into the capitalist system. If bourgeois society were as pervasively hegemonic, as totally inter-related and as capable of specialising in the "confiscation" of rebellion as Marcuse and his followers suggest, then the despised functionalism of bourgeois sociology is more nearly vindicated than ever before (at least in the supposedly unfavourable context of advanced industrial society).

The most obvious technique employed by Blackburn is the utilisation of a type of slippery evasion involved in "to some extent," "perhaps," and "in many respects." Add this to selective quotation, guesses as to what Talcott Parsons might have meant based on what Kornhauser did mean, and the occasional straight inaccuracy,[5] and you have a perfect formula for professional defamation and ideological distortion. Take the following piece of misrepresentation:

> Social scientists often proclaim a commitment to "scientific values" but rarely consider the nature of such values to be a problematic question.

This is just *untrue* since social scientists are obsessively concerned with this question; and for Blackburn to select crude versions of positivism as paradigmatic for social science reduces his polemic to an absurd level; it is no wonder he so disdains the notion of objective fact. Or take the claim that bourgeois social science is wedded to the notion that everything is as it appears. Quite apart from the Marxist element which exists *within* social science as a fructifying and dialectical component, has he never read Durkheim or Weber, or their modern variants? What about the notion of "latent function"? What about the sociology of knowledge? Ever heard of residues and derivations?

TO TURN TO Perry Anderson. Like Robin Blackburn he has just that kind of fast slippery mind in which the facts have as much chance of catching up with the self-validating schema as winded empirical greyhounds have of catching a metaphysical electric hare. Moreover, Anderson positively justifies his selectivity by claiming it is intentional. But when does selectivity become sheer distortion? How wrong do you have to be in order to be just wrong? Take for a start the thesis that there is an "absent centre" in British culture and that no social scientist of an original calibre was ever thrown up in Britain. This is just patently not the case: leaving the Scots aside, Herbert Spencer is a major figure by any standards, and certainly the equal of Pareto. The achievement of L. T. Hobhouse in comparative developmental sociology is a massive one (even though its author was philosophically within hailing distance of the anaemic British idealism Anderson so much dislikes). Similarly, Morris Ginsberg. Or take the suggestion that sociology is a poor cousin of social work: what kind of ignorant nonsense is this? And so on and on. Britain produced no important Marxist thinker: well, it depends on what you mean by "Marxist," but one of the central components of Marxist thinking, the theory of imperialism, was contributed by J. A. Hobson (1902), and Christopher Caudwell's *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938) is a significant intellectual achievement.

In Anderson's view the "white emigration" of Continental liberals and conservatives domi-

[5] *Viz.*, the claim that schizophrenia coming to the attention of the medical authorities is found in 20% of families; in fact, it is 4% at the most.

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nated the gap left by the "absent centre," exploiting their superiority to and their affinity with British culture.[6]

The case is best made out for philosophy, though as usual Anderson shuffles the time-scale around to suit his purposes. Wittgenstein has only dominated English philosophy since the war, and the argument ought to be that he suited North Oxford rather than that he suited England. Moreover, the counter-attack on this domination came from Ernest Gellner, who represents the hated liberal utilitarian tradition and who incidentally produced *Thought and Change* (1965) which on the premises of this article has no right to exist. Anderson actually notes that the attacks in several fields come from *within* the culture and from *within* the liberal tradition (Carr, Leach, Gellner)—but then blithely carries on as if there were no need to revise his argument.

If that argument is half true for philosophy and for North Oxford, it is absurd for history. You cannot use L. B. Namier as a "white emigrant" who conveniently "stands in" for English history. As Anderson knows perfectly well there is a Marxist school of history in England: Hill, Hobsbawm, Thompson, Dobb, Saville and others. And what about the achievements of English *economic* history, to take just one aspect highly relevant to his thesis? Whatever would his contentions have looked like if he had selected the native Tawney and not the emigrant Namier? (Or *Sir* Herbert Read[7] in aesthetics and William Empson in literary criticism?) He is good on some individual thinkers (Namier and Leavis, especially) but wrong about the discipline and therefore wrong about the significant inter-relation between the disciplines. And of course he does well to omit the sciences and the arts on the spurious ground (at least for the arts) that they are not appropriate to this context. The culture that produces a Henry Moore, a Barbara Hepworth or a Benjamin Britten has a vigorous continuity and is scarcely "becalmed."

What might more plausibly have been argued (only it is a platitude and fashionable novelty is preferable) is not that chloroform and amnesia characterise our stagnant island but that its critical tradition does not aspire to the premature syntheses, to pretentious explanations of Everything, and to naturalistic metaphysics; nor does it harbour the totalitarian decisive "cultural hegemony" of Revolution of which he speaks with such misplaced adulation. And it does lack something of the underlying *angst* which some people find so profound. No doubt we have never been sufficiently split open in our psychology to be taken in by Freudianism. But Anderson constantly wobbles between saying that a becalmed society is either culturally mediocre or afflicted by amnesia. Yet Bertrand Russell was a product of the "calm": he "dominated" English philosophy up to World War II, and he was neither mediocre nor given to amnesia. In any case there is a position *between* "revolutionary hegemony" and "chloroform." No doubt Anderson despises it for that reason. Yet the tradition of critical empiricism from Booth to Titmuss is no mean succession, and however much the New Left may sneer, it just so happens that such people have made England a fairly tolerant, decent, and pleasant place to live in. Perhaps that is why the white emigrants came here after enjoying the fruits of "totalisation." And though Blackburn may complain about illegitimate or blurring conflations, totalisation is always first cousin to totalitarianism.

How is it that the New Left has not been brought by historical events to reflect more deeply on why it is that Czechs find them and their German and French *confrères* so absurd? The reason is they know what genuine repression is as distinct from the bogus repressions of tortured fantasies. As a member of the Czech Communist Party put it to me recently, "I have discussed these things with your New Left and now they don't want to speak with me any more...." Very wise of them. Isn't it curious (or to use their phraseology, "It is no accident...") that the Marxist tradition is only interesting in the despised West whereas wherever it triumphs it establishes a "cultural hegemony" nearer to death than chloroform?[8] If I may quote from a Marxist colleague in Eastern Europe: "How lucky you are in the West to be able to discuss freely and critically such important matters as power and prestige, the role of the military, the extent of educational equality—when we are restricted to such managerial matters as the morale of the labour force. You know, we are more totally alienated than any other intelligentsia! We do not dare to think. It is our supreme achievement to sur-

[6] The accusation that we neglected the tiny "red emigration," *e.g.*, F. Antal and Isaac Deutscher, is a bit thin. Deutscher's Trevelyan Lectureship at Oxford in 1966 was not without honour. Antal was not ignored; and in spite of our becalmed cultural condition, sales of his books have trebled since he died.

[7] We knight the native rebels as well as the migrant conformists.

[8] The New Left turns a blind right eye to the mere historical appearance of Marxist régimes. But dialecticians who can tell essences from appearances can also divine that they are the *true* revolutionary missionaries and it will presumably be with *them* that libertarian revolution will achieve its finest flowering.

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vive. . . ." The truth is that so-called bourgeois sociology, here and elsewhere, discusses precisely the important problems just mentioned; and it is also true that even the most dissident and self-alienated in the Western democracies are able to do more than survive. Some of them even produce readable books on Student Power and sell 25,000 copies in the first week. It seems our battered old culture is as kind to red natives as to white emigrants. Playboys of the Western world, unite!—You have nothing to lose but your royalties. . . .

The City & the House

On Recent Poetry — By RONALD HAYMAN

ROBERT DUNCAN'S English reputation is being almost as slow to catch up with his achievement as William Carlos Williams' was. He has been studiously ignored by publishers, critics, and anthologists. If his name has been mentioned at all, it has almost invariably been to bracket him with Charles Olson and Robert Creeley. Certainly Olson has had a strong influence on him and Creeley a slight influence since the early 1950s, when all three of them were teaching at Black Mountain College. But now that an English publisher (Fulcrum Press) has brought out a two-volume selection of his work from 1940 to 1956, it will be harder to ignore the fact that he was already a mature poet before he went to Black Mountain. He was born in 1919 and *The First Decade*[1] contains poems he wrote in his twenties, culminating in the work he did in 1947–49 when he emerged (with Brother Antoninus and Robin Blaser) among the leading spirits of the "San Francisco Renaissance."

Duncan's metaphysical premisses may be quite unacceptable to us but, as with Yeats, they do not invalidate the poetry. He has always believed in a transcendant reality and in a "continuity of spirit in the universe." The whole of creation is charged with meaning.

> To evoke an image is to receive a sign, [he writes in *The H. D. Book*] to bring into human language a word or a phrase of the great language in which the universe itself is written. . . . The things of the poem, the words in their musical phrasings, here are *sacra*, charged with divine power, and give birth to poems as the poet sings, as the powers of stones, waters, winds, in men's rites give birth to gods.

In his early poems, the Miltonic cadences and the habit of straining after absolutes take the edge off his directness. But the authoritative tone of voice and the sensitivity to detail combine to compel our attention, even when he is adopting an orphic stance, as in "An Apollonian Elegy." Though he is less economical with words than he became later, he depended on verbs rather than on adjectives, achieving great muscularity and flexibility. In "Heavenly City, Earthly City" his mind throbs painfully with longings for eternity and the pain leaves a clear residue in the rhythms. He has quoted Ezra Pound as saying "I believe in technique as the test of a man's sincerity"; the proof of Robert Duncan's sincerity is the relationship he has achieved between the pulse of the sensation and the pulse of the line.

"The Venice Poem" (1948) represents an important turning point in his development. The language varies effectively between the elegiac and the colloquial. The visual perceptions become sharper, the rhythms more incisive, and there is a greater precision in the shaping of the lines. But above all it is a feat of structure. Othello's Venice swims behind the Venice that Duncan observes and the whole poem (conscious of itself looking) resembles a series of reflecting surfaces angled in on each other. But nothing remains static and the movement probes into the nature of the processes that are constantly at work in us and on us.

Faithless and painful, why does the rose
never cease unfolding
but grows and unfurls
the swirl, the twist—
the hot clasp of bodies,
embraces,
as if with love, lips fastened,
eyes staring or closed,
having this power to hold one,
having no power
other than this power of clasping.

Yet here seeks the heart solace.
Dismay, strain, exhaustion often,
anger, pain, endurance.

Like a self-destroying machine, the poem

[1] *The First Decade*. By ROBERT DUNCAN. Fulcrum Press, 35s.

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works its way forwards into a total collapse. There are five despairing stanzas in the coda which all end with the Beckett-like line "I am barely able to go on." The substance of the stanzas justifies the refrain but the ensuing sequence, in which the poem picks itself off the ground to enact the birth of a baby, is less successful. The affirmative note seems *voulu*.

The First Decade ends with two poems inspired by the Korean War and *Derivations*[2] begins with a third, "An Essay on War." A poem still in the process of being written is compared with a war still in the process of being fought. The form and language change as the questions it asks go deeper. Like "The Venice Poem" it drives itself to a standstill and twice it breaks down into prose. But the poetry, self-conscious but well able to make each of its own movements meaningful, revives itself with the intensity of its own efforts to make itself go on, trying to make sense of its efforts to make sense of experience that makes no sense.

In the long run, Olson's influence was to prove fruitful for Duncan but *Derivations* is taken up mainly with the prose poems, the "Letters" and the imitations of Gertrude Stein he wrote between 1951 and 1955, which are less interesting than either his earlier or his later work. He went through a severe spiritual crisis in San Francisco in 1956, during which it was almost impossible for him to write verse but the (prose) letters he wrote to himself are fascinating and moving. It is also interesting in "For a Muse Meant" to watch him hovering over each pause in his verse, keeping himself enjoyably in suspense about what was going to come next. The poetry is in the process. But what we now need is a selection or better still a collection—of his verse between 1956 and 1969. It is in this period that all his best work has been done.[3]

MEANWHILE Cape Goliard have published a handsome first edition of Olson's *Maximus Poems. IV, V, VI.* (The 1960 American edition of the earlier *Maximus Poems* is still in print and can be bought over here.)[4] Writing under the shadow of Pound's Cantos and Williams' *Paterson*, Olson has tried to delve back further than Pound into pre-history and to create a more sharply defined image than Williams of a modern city.

There are passages where Olson succeeds very

[2] *Derivations.* By ROBERT DUNCAN. Fulcrum Press, 35s.

[3] A start has now been made by Jonathan Cape with the publication of Duncan's 1960 volume, *The Opening of the Field*, 25s.

[4] *Maximus Poems IV, V, VI.* By CHARLES OLSON. Cape Goliard, 55., paper 30s. *Maximus Poems*, McBride & Broadley, 21s.

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well in evoking and satirising the realities of urban living. He focuses on Gloucester (Massachusetts) and, to quote Duncan's summary of the central conceit, "Homo maximus wrests his life from the underworld as the Gloucester fisherman wrests his from the sea." Gobbets of local history are lovingly dredged up and patiently reassembled. Modern wit sometimes flashes brightly through the historical material but the poem as a whole is maddeningly uneven. His method prevents him from providing linkages. The material must be allowed to speak for itself without any explanation of its relevance, and he incorporates long stretches of (apparently) verbatim quotation from documents which have a bearing on local history, assuming that his placing of them inside his structure will suffice to make them meaningful. It doesn't. At its best, though, his writing has a vitality in common with Duncan's. He is often very successful in making the movement of the verse imitate the movement he is describing.

Towards the beginning of *Maximus IV*, he comes close to formulating a statement of his aims in the whole poem sequence:

> *An American*
> *is a complex of occasions,*
> *themselves a geometry*
> *of spatial nature.*
>
> *I have this sense,*
> *that I am one*
> *with my skin*
>
> *Plus this—plus this:*
> *that forever the geography*
> *which leans in*
> *on me I compell*
> *backwards I compell Gloucester*
> *to yield, to*
> *change*
> *Polis*
> *is this*

In his book on *Moby Dick, Call Me Ishmael*, he wrote that "Melville had a way of reaching back through time until he got history pushed back so far he turned time into space." Olson is trying to turn place into time. By taking a single town and constructing a deep but narrow shaft into its past, he is hoping to achieve a statement about the process by which a small fishing community can grow into a town in which

> *pictures*
> *will be necessary on the covers of the TV dinners*
> *to let children know that mackerel is a different looking thing than herrings.*

Unfortunately the failure of the poem is not merely the almost inevitable failure to carry out such a highly ambitious idea. What should not have been inevitable is the variation in the amount of pressure behind the lines. There are passages where historical, geographical, geological, and archeological elements are all fused and illuminated in the same flash of awareness and where the versification contributes its full share to the statement Olson is making. But there are also long passages where he bogs himself down in obscure incidents from the past which have no apparent relevance to the present and where the poetic line is loose and sprawling. Sometimes he seems to think that each genuine piece of local history possesses its own alembic to distil itself into poetry.

JOHN BERRYMAN, who was born in 1914, four years after Olson, has very little in common with him except a predilection for the long poem. *His Toy, His Dream, His Rest*[5] contains 308 Dream Songs which carry on from where *77 Dream Songs* left off and the 385 Dream Songs add up to about the same length as *The Maximus Poems*. If both poets had chosen to write a series of shorter poems we ought to have been able to rate some of them as quite successful but if we are forced to judge both *The Maximus Poems* and the *Dream Songs* as single works, we can only come up with a verdict of failure. In an essay called "Changes" which he contributed to Howard Nemerov's *Poets on Poetry*, Berryman insisted that the separate Dream Songs were "parts not poems." He described the three conditions of writing a long poem as (1) a "high and prolonged riskness," (2) the necessity of constructing a world rather than relying on one already existent which is available to the short poem, and (3) having to face problems of decorum that most poets do not have to face. I wish he had taken higher risks and set himself higher standards of decorum and I doubt whether even the critics who are impressed by the Dream Songs would claim that they construct a world of their own.

In *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet* Berryman set himself the formidable problem of contriving a poetic symbiosis between his own voice and the voice of the 17th-century poet with whom the American tradition could be said to have started. The syntax is as idiosyncratic and as clotted as Gerard Manley Hopkins', from which it derives, without having Hopkins' justification of extending the resources of the language and bringing poetry closer to living speech. But at least Berryman's poem achieves a rich texture and an exciting tension. The language of the Dream Songs is more colloquial and they impose a lighter burden on the reader but the texture is far thinner and the tension grows slacker as the poem proceeds.

[5] *His Toy, His Dream, His Rest*. By JOHN BERRYMAN. Faber, 50s.

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No persona was needed in *Homage to Mistress Bradstreet.* In the nine "Nervous Songs" (in *Later Poems*) which clearly prefigure the Dream Songs and which are also written (with one slight variation) in three 6-line stanzas, Berryman uses nine different personae and uses them well, characterising the speaking voice with a light and humorous touch. But in the Dream Songs, there is no serious attempt to characterise Henry: he is just a device for saying "This is not me." But many of the songs bristle with references to situations and with complaints about life which are only comprehensible by equating Henry with Berryman. In Song 354 we hear that

The only happy people in the world
are those who do not have to write long poems:

and in the next Song but one

The London TLS
are mounting só much of him he could scream.

Many of the Songs are obviously padded out to fill 18 lines and many consist of lackadaisically versified diary-jottings. Olson is sometimes like this: able to continue the long poem only by making it into a journal. Berryman tells us that base envy of the very young affects Henry, that in a lecture-hall he threw two chairs which the janitors had piled on the podium on to the floor, that an invitation to the White House arrived three weeks after the reception, that one day he found his fly open and received a long letter from Northern California enclosing a bad poem, that he had to give a lecture after being sick twice and that he smoked his way through a whole pack of cigarettes by ten o'clock in the morning. He also tells us how tiring Henry finds it to have all this applause and to have young beauties sitting at his feet.

Presumably the surname Berryman gives him (House) signifies a deliberate withdrawal from the position Williams took in *Paterson*, making the hero and the city share a name and an identity. Berryman will limit himself to the personal and the domestic. Occasionally there are references to current American politics and to Viet Nam and there are a few references to environment in the Irish sequence but in the main, the horizons of the poem remain narrowly personal. In the earlier Songs, the Mr. Bones joke works as a deflationary safety valve on the poem's egocentricity, but as Berryman goes on using it, it becomes less funny and less effective. The relationships with girls are all introduced vaguely and subjectively. The only meaningful points of exterior reference are the writers who are mourned rather in the style of Robert Lowell's laments for his dead friends. The sequence for Delmore Schwartz (Songs 146–159) is the best part of the poem.

The University of Chicago Press

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GEORGE SEFERIS uses a persona, Mr. Stratis Thalassinos, in some of his poems but with him, the question of how tightly the mask fits the face never bothers us. Not because Seferis characterises Mr. Thalassinos but because he defines his relationship to his environment and to the people he meets. Very few passages in Seferis' *Collected Poems*[6] are directly descriptive but the presence of the sea and the mountains is beautifully realised. The drift of the poet's mind is always away from himself and his strong feeling for external reality makes it seem easy for him to plant the presence of the past and of the Greek myths in very solid soil.

Seferis, who translated Eliot into Greek, owes a great deal to him, but he has one big advantage. Where Eliot had to invent rituals, as he did in *The Family Reunion*, Seferis can draw on rituals which still survive in village practice. On the eve of the feast day of St. John, girls drop molten lead into cold water. The shape the lead takes indicates the trade of the girl's future husband and at midnight she stands naked in front of a mirror, praying that the first name she will hear on waking up will be his name. But in translation at least, the lines in which Seferis refers to the practice have a very Eliot ring.

At the hour when one day ends and the next has not begun
at the hour when time is suspended
you must find the man who then and now, from the very beginning, ruled your body
you must look for him so that someone else at least
will find him, after you are dead.

What is most impressive about Seferis is the way he synthesises such diverse elements so compellingly. He draws on religious practice, superstition, mythology, classical literature, modern literature, his observations of his physical environment and of other people and his fantasy. His sophisticated and sometimes macabre sense of humour is very much in evidence in these syntheses. In one story that Mr. Thalassinos tells, a young man sailed with Captain Odysseus for a year, sitting in the prow beside the mermaid and singing to her. But

[6] *Collected Poems* 1924–1955 by GEORGE SEFERIS. Jonathan Cape, 75s. This gives the Greek text together with translations, an introduction and notes by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard.

[7] *Poems for People Who Don't Read Poems.* By HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER. Secker & Warburg, 42s. The German text is given with translations by Michael Hamburger, Jerome Rothenberg and Enzensberger himself. *Poems of Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, Penguin Books, 4s., contains the same translations without the German text.

do better than Enzensberger. He often adds, but Sophia, he couldn't bear to face her.

IN SEFERIS, WE GET a clear sense of the individuality behind the syntheses, the preoccupations, the perspectives on the environment, but the environment that preoccupies Hans Magnus Enzensberger is not so much physical and cultural as social and economic, and very little of his self filters through his presentation of his personal view. The verse in *Poems For People Who Don't Read Poems*[7] is selected from three volumes published in Germany between 1959 and 1964 and some later uncollected poems.

There is no doubt about the depth of Enzensberger's disaffection but in his untiring efforts to count the cost of the Economic Miracle, he hits the same nails on the head again and again. In the earlier poems he is too busy to pay any attention to questions of form; in the later poems, when he isn't, he achieves more variety and more resonance.

By writing "Lachesis Lapponica" in the form of a dialogue between himself and a bird inside his head, he is also able to admit his own ambivalence, instead of presenting a monolith of hostile criticism. The collage of quotations from advertising matter on the packages in a supermarket which he incorporates into "Portrait of a House Detective" also has the effect of interrupting the narrative voice. The later poems depend more and more on collage. "Summer Poem" (1964) is the most extended and the most complex experiment in the technique. "Its formal principle is that of openness," he announces in a note on the poem, going on to describe what he means in terms that are very reminiscent of Olson's manifesto for "open field composition." What matters though is the use to which he puts the method and certainly with its mixture of quotation, narrative, and comment, of political and erotic elements, of repetitions and questions, and of different languages, the writing reaches a higher level than in the earlier poems. If the overall effect is more tentative and interrogative, it shows that he is beginning to expose not less but more of himself than when he seems to be speaking in his own voice.

The translations could have been better. Michael Hamburger only has occasional lapses:

wo wir uns finden wohl unter blinden

is rendered as

where on the bonny bonny banks we play blind man's buff.

But Jerome Rothenberg, who introduces an American hysteria into the book, thinks he can

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do better than Enzensberger. He often adds, but even when he subtracts, he changes the emphasis. In the poem "Automat,"

er sieht sich selber
fur einen augenblick
ist er erschienen
fur einen augenblick
sieht er aus wie ein mensch

becomes

he sees himself
for a fleeting moment
and he almost looks like a man.

Altogether the Secker & Warburg edition has been very carelessly prepared. There is a line missing from the German on page 78, and from the English on page 5. There is also a title missing on page 108.

WRITING ABOUT Walt Whitman, Eliot said that his originality was spurious in so far as he wrote in a way that asserted his great prose was a new form of verse. I wonder what he would have said about Allen Ginsberg. In *Kaddish* some of the autobiographical writing reaches a very high level but in the best sections (I and II) the lines are so very long and the rhythms are so much the rhythms of rhythmic prose that Ginsberg can hardly be said to be writing verse at all.

"Television Was a Baby Crawling Toward that Death Chamber" is the only poem in *Planet News* in which the lines are equally long but there is no point in making distinctions between the poems according to the length of the line. What matters is that none of the writing in *Planet News* or in *Ankor Wat*[8] attains the same intensity or the same level of quality that Ginsberg achieved in *Kaddish*. At that time he was reaching into his private experience in a way that he couldn't have done if he had had his sights fixed on an audience. The recent work is like free association with a megaphone attached to the couch or extracts from a diary written for the express purpose of reading it out at poetry-readings.

Planet News contains work written during the years 1961–7. Ginsberg has travelled all over the globe, from Galilee and the Ganges to the Soviet Union. He came to London for Poetry International at the Albert Hall, gave readings all over the U.S.A., and travelled through South East Asia. But the references to the world

[8] *Planet News*. By ALLEN GINSBERG. City Lights Books, 17s. 6d. *Ankor Wat*. By ALLEN GINSBERG. Fulcrum Press. 25s. Paperback 15s.

Letters of Aldous Huxley

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around him do very little to cloak his self-absorption, which is more dangerous even than Berryman's, for he has no ear at all for any humorous, deflating voice that might try to make itself heard inside his head. Characteristically, he interprets "Buddham Saranam Gochamee, Dhammam Saranam Gochamee, Sangham Saranam Gochamee" ("I take my refuge in the Buddha, I take my refuge in the Dharma, I take my refuge in the Sangha") as "I take my refuge in my Self, I take my refuge in the nature of my Self, I take my refuge in the company of my fellow Selfs."

It is interesting to compare his way of singing a song of himself with Whitman's. The "Love Poem on a Theme by Whitman" in *Reality Sandwiches* is a good pointer to the difference. Whitman identified himself with everything that his consciousness embraced, sublimating his homosexuality and his auto-erotism into a fantasy of sharing in all the love-making, participating in all the harmony he saw in the world around him. The "I" in the poems is a chemical of infinite valency, wanting to combine with every other unit or complex of units. His insatiable appetite forced him into incessant cataloguing of the rich physical life he saw around him. He included it in his poetry as if by mentioning it he could annex it. Ginsberg, who makes no effort to disguise or sublimate his homosexuality and his auto-erotism, is physically and unattractively concerned with the act of annexing.

legs raised up crook'd to receive, cock in the darkness driven tormented and attacking
roused up from hole to itching head,
bodies locked shuddering naked, hot lips and buttocks screwed
into each other

Instead of accreting externals, as Whitman did, Ginsberg in effect excludes everything that cannot be related to the flow of personal sensual experience. "Who be Kind to" is Whitmanesque both in its cataloguing structure and in its device of starting line after line with the same phrase. But when he pushes himself into the poem, Ginsberg knocks over the house of cards he has built up.

I want the orgy of our flesh, orgy
of all eyes happy, orgy of the soul
kissing and blessing its mortal-grown body,
orgy of tenderness beneath the neck, orgy of kindness to thigh and vagina
Desire given with meat hand
and cock, desire taken with
mouth and ass, desire returned
to the last sigh!

This is like trying to rape the Queen of Diamonds. It reminds us that everything he has catalogued in the poem has remained two-dimensional.

INEVITABLY, THE SERIOUSNESS with which Ginsberg is taken by a large audience has not only encouraged the pop poetry movement, it has encouraged the pop poets to take themselves seriously. Adrian Henri's *Tonight at Noon*[9] contains 61 pages of poems followed by 19 pages of "Notes on Painting and Poetry." He quotes Mallarmé's line *"donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu"* and this is his gloss:

> To me the implications of this are obvious: to purify the dialect of *my* tribe. My tribe includes motor-bike specialists, consultant gynaecologists, Beatle fans, the people who write "Coronation Street," peeping toms, admen, in fact the language of anyone saying anything about anything in English. This implies the whole spectrum of specialist jargon, argot, dialect. More specifically I think my concern should be with the whole area of language as it impinges on me, now. Because we live in an era of communications-explosion, certain specialist uses of language seem particularly relevant: that of advertising (hoardings, slogans, tv ads) or newspaper headlines, where the aim is to transmit a message (or feeling) as quickly as perception allows, or that of popsongs or tv jingles where the basic aim is to establish a word/sound pattern in the memory as quickly as possible.

By which time he has muddled himself into forgetting all about the word "purify."

The collage method, which can be used as Olson or Enzensberger used it, can also be used as Adrian Henri uses it, making a collage of ideas he has jotted down as they occurred to him:

I want to paint
2000 dead birds crucified on a background of night
Thoughts that lie too deep for tears
Thoughts that lie too deep for queers
Thoughts that move at 186,000 miles/second
The Entry of Christ into Liverpool in 1966–7–8 and 9
The Installation of Roger McGough to the Chair of Poetry at Oxford
Francis Bacon making the President's Speech at the Royal Academy Dinner
Adrian Mitchell with 15 poems in the Top 20
Charlie Mingus playing the Mike Evans song book

[9] *Tonight at Noon*. By ADRIAN HENRI. Rapp & Whiting, 21s. Paperback, 10s. 6d.

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Butchers throwing bits of Jeff Nuttall and Robin Page at the audience
The entire population of the British Isles leaping like lemmings into the North Sea

Roy Fisher is a jazz pianist but his poetry is quite unlike pop poetry. His *Collected Poems*[10] reveal a very interesting talent. In the pictures he draws of Birmingham, his strong sense of place works hand in hand with his affectionate awareness of people.

Denise Levertov has compared his "The City" with *Paterson*, which is flattering to Roy Fisher but not absurd. There is good writing both in the verse and in the prose passages which interlard it. By a careful descriptive focus on parts of the city, Roy Fisher creates an impression of it as a whole, rooting the human lives into the industrial landscape. His rhythms imply sympathy and criticism at the same time and he generates a genuine poetry by crowding unpoetic details together. Images jostle each other like slum buildings and the tone conveys a mixture of resignation and resentment.

What steps descend, what rails conduct?
Sodium bulbs equivocate,
And cowls of ventilators
With limewashed breath hint at the places
To which the void lift cages plunge or soar.

Prints on the landing walls
Are all gone blind with steam;
A voice under the floor
Swings a dull axe against a door.

The gaping office block of night
Shudders into the deep sky overhead:

Thrust down your foot in sleep
Among its depths.

Christopher Levenson's *Cairns*[11] contains some of his best work so far. He uses his rhythms to build up a pressure which helps him to probe beyond the surfaces of the facts and the external details which he makes so concrete. Many of the poems are about extreme situations—death or the separation of lovers—but it is only rarely that he becomes rhetorical (as he does in "The Death of Shelley"). Some of the poems on political themes are weaker. In "Dust" the despair seems too casual, the rhythms too placid for the statement about the annihilation of the world, but where he ties his political theme to a specific situation (as in "Transit Camp" and "Incognito") he fares better.

He seldom works in a tight metrical framework but he always shows a strong sense of rhythm. Rhyme he uses only occasionally, but to great effect. The title poem ends with an abrupt shift to two stanzas of ironic rhyming Audenesque couplets and "The Ballad of the Psycho-Analyst" is written in withering quatrains:

And I don't imagine *things any more,*
I'm a normal person again,
but in the recess that was once my soul
I still feel the absence of pain.

After bringing out three anthologies of short stories by new writers under the title *Introduction*, Faber have applied the idea to verse. Of the nine writers represented in *Poetry: Introduction I*,[12] Elaine Feinstein and David Harsent are particularly interesting. Miss Feinstein writes delicate but strong-fibred poems, mostly with very short lines. Mr. Harsent dances an idiosyncratic *pas seul* between a tenderness that just avoids sentimentality and a cruelty that flings iron-hard images on to the retina.

[10] *Collected Poems*. By Roy Fisher. Fulcrum Press, 28s.
[11] *Cairns*. By Christopher Levenson. Chatto & Windus, 18s.
[12] *Poetry: Introduction I*. Faber & Faber, 25s. Paperback, 7s.

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LETTERS

Davie's Hobbits

DONALD DAVIE's reading [ENCOUNTER, October] of *The Lord of the Rings* as "a parable of authority" depends on interpreting the Ring of the story as a symbol of power as such. This will not work, if only because power in the ordinary sense is in fact exercised on the literal level by several of the characters—small-scale monarchs like the original Creon—and the narrative plainly says that this is a Good Thing provided they use it justly. What the Ring confers is a specific, magical power which has no direct analogy in the actual world, and it is only *this* power, or rather its source, which is supposed to be inescapably and totally corrupting. We are not therefore being incited to assume towards power as such the attitude which Mr. Davie supposes, nor any other attitude. In fact it would be hard to imagine a less political book; it is pre-political, appealing at a more primary level. Nor is it, either by the design of its author or by involuntary tendency, a parable of anything.

But if this is not the reason for the book's fascination for so many people, what is? There are various reasons; one of them is without doubt its appeal to the "hunger for the heroic" which Mr. Davie mentions but dismisses (it all depends what you mean by heroic). Another is its use of certain themes which one has to call myths for lack of a better word.

But almost the most important is the landscape (a landscape with figures—the characters are part of it). Discussions of *The Lord of the Rings* which leave this out read like earnest critiques of an opera which do not mention the music. Anyone who wonders why Auden likes the book should consider this (also its sobriety). Indeed anyone attempting to criticise it, whether as a literary or a social phenomenon, who does not respond to the landscape of Middle Earth or allow for that response—"the sense of a continent"—is likely to go wrong from the start; we are not talking about the same book. Also the landscape is not simply the background to the action but the reason for it; its existence is the issue; the struggle is between those who wish or are willing to destroy it (in Sauron's vocabulary "possess" and "destroy" are synonyms) and those who are determined that it shall continue to be, even if this entails their losing it themselves. That is what the book is about.

V. LULING

Reigate Heath,
Surrey

I DOUBT IF many admirers of *The Lord of the Rings* read it as Mr. Luling does. Still, his is a plausible reading, and to me an attractive one; I agree that the landscape of Middle Earth is more than just a setting for the action. But what does he mean by "power in the ordinary sense"? What power is more "ordinary," in the sense of more immediately manifest to the layman, than the power which, every hour of every day, disfigures the landscapes of Britain as of the United States—disfigures them to the point of destroying them? The concerned citizen of either country, if he can still muster the faith and the energy, has to ask by what authority this power exerts itself to destroy what is the common heritage of all of us—the earth we walk on, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. So far from being "pre-political," this issue is for the moment post-political, in the sense that few politicians, and few of their constituents, have yet woken up to the fact that their responsibilities extend beyond the social to the ecological; that they cannot fulfil their responsibilities to humankind except by being responsible also for the fish that humankind eats, the soil that we till, and the trees that we plant and fell. A few biologists, warning us that pollution of the elements will in a matter of decades make a lot of the globe uninhabitable, are almost alone in urging that conservation of landscape and of its natural resources is, and must be acknowledged to be, urgently a matter of practical politics. In the last few months more than 900 million dollars have been paid for oil and gas leases so as to "develop" Alaska north of the Brooks Range. And yet Mr. Luling can say that the specific magical power of the Ring "has no direct analogy in the actual world"!

DONALD DAVIE

Stanford University

Chomsky Replies Again

CORRECTING false statements that appear in ENCOUNTER is tedious, but I will nevertheless make the effort once again, restricting myself now to the references to me in the issue of December 1969.

Seymour Martin Lipset has an article in which he states that I "was a long time member of 'Hashomer Hatzair,' the left-wing Zionist youth movement, which prided itself on its Marxism-Leninism, and its loyalty to Communist ideals." He claims that along with I. F. Stone, I have "a commitment which currently involves defining the *Al Fatah* terrorists as 'left-wing guerrillas,' and Israel as 'a collaborator with imperialism,' if not worse" (note the quotation marks).

These statements are all false. I was never a member of Hashomer Hatzair, precisely because I always objected to its Leninism (and for dominant factions, its pro-Stalinist leanings). I have never described *Al Fatah* as an organisation of "left-wing guerrillas," or Israel as "a collaborator with imperialism." The only references I have made to Israel are these: a single sentence in my *American Power and the New Mandarins* where I say that "the current Middle East crisis is a typical, painful example" of "irreconcilable interests, each with a claim to legitimacy, and conflicting principles, none of which can be lightly abandoned"; a footnote in an essay in *The New Left* (P. Long, ed., Porter-Sargent, 1969), where I discuss the Kibbutz as "an example of major importance" for socialists (exactly what Lipset claims is overlooked by the New Left, though he is surely aware that it is the radical centralisers of the "Old Left" who are primarily

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Berlin

EAST GERMAN *border guards today turned back a truck carrying books by Norman Mailer and Cornelius Ryan.*

The books involved were Mr. Mailer's "The Naked and the Dead," about World War II fighting in the Pacific, and Mr. Ryan's chronicle about the Russian-German battle for Berlin, "The Last Battle."

West Berlin police said the truck carrying copies of the books had to wait for seven hours at an East German-Bavarian border control point. Then it was told it had to go back to West German territory and unload the books before it could continue to West Berlin.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

LATIN, *we were told this week, is coming back as a trendy new subject in progressively minded schools. Latin! Which we have been told for years has been wasting our time, breaking our schoolboy spirits, filling our heads with useless knowledge. Latin is a dead language!*

A priori, it's dead. A fortiori, there is no prima facie case for learning it ipso facto. Requiescat in pace. And de mortuis nil nisi bonum.

What use is Latin in our modern world? How can it fit you for politics? You may consult omens, in the form of a quiz of the vox populi, or hold a referendum re any crisis, major or minor, but why bring Latin into it?

If economics is your field, you may call for the data on your export quota, adjusting for addenda or errata, plus or minus, till you achieve the maximum (or the optimum) figures down to the last decimal, per cent, per capita and per annum. You will hope for a bonus in the interim . . . but why mention Latin?

English law will grind on, in camera and sub judice with the help of an affidavit and an alibi or two, in English, as it has since Magna Carta and habeas corpus. Music will play on without Latin from opus to opera, and so will the Church from Te Deum *to* Magnificat. *Modern medicine will assure us that homo sapiens has no Latin in him from the cranium to the tibia and everything in the garden will be lovely from the quercus to the geranium.*

Away with it, we say, this useless impedimenta. Mens sana in corpore sano. It was all very well centuries ago, but tempus fugit. Anno domini has changed all that. We have had enough of the status quo. Britons never, never, never shall be slaves of a dead language. Floreat Britannia!

They used to say the Greeks had a word for it. But how could they, and how could the Romans, know what to call such modern inventions as the automobile, the accelerator, the omnibus, aeroplanes, gramophones, photographs, telephones, stereo, video, radio and television? They had never seen a computer or a supermarket. What would they make of an astronaut? Confronted with unisex, words would fail them.

Latin lovers—and we know what they *got up to—may murmur "Amor vincit omnia" and other sweet nothings but they should get back to terra firma. We know they are non compos mentis (and probably in flagrante delicto as well). They should be shown the exit. There is only one sine qua non of progress, i.e., e.g. and viz: Change. Mutatis mutandis, pro tem, pro rata and pro bono publico. By Jupiter! In vino veritas. Ars longa, vita brevis, and we have wasted quite enough time being told of the use of Latin ad hoc, ad infinitum, ad lib and ad naus. Let us write finis to the whole business. It is dead.*

Quod erat, by the way, demonstrandum.

DAILY MAIL

To CLAY FELKER, *Editor,* New York Magazine.

Dear Clay: Ideology launches a thousand ships every day, I know; but in civilised places, at least the effort is made to look honest about it. In your issue of September 15, your editors list the books of the forthcoming season, with comments, and divide them into two categories, "Worth While" and "Worth Little." Under "Worth Little" I see:

> "Odyssey of a Friend: Whittaker Chambers' Letters to William F. Buckley Jr., 1954–1961 (*Putnam*). *What can one say?"*

What one can say is not a goddamn thing. Because the ideologised imposter who put the book in that category had not even seen the book, not a single review copy having been sent out (the existing edition is privately printed). I do believe we have here the locus classicus *of book-burning, liberal style. Do you agree?*

Yours faithfully, WM. F. BUCKLEY, JR.

CC: J. K. Galbraith, Hugh Kenner, Irving Kristol, John Leonard, Clare Boothe Luce, Malcolm Muggeridge, A. M. Rosenthal, Arthur Schlesinger

P.S. Mr. Felker's answer will be published just as soon as it comes in, but remember, the mails are very slow.

NATIONAL REVIEW

London

THE LANGUAGE *of Mr. Rupert Murdoch's new "Sun" newspaper would make an interesting study in itself. Mr. Frank Nicklin, the "Sun" Sports Editor, opens his address to his readers with the words* "THIS IS IT FOLKS." *It would be very interesting to know whom, except for his readers, Mr. Nicklin would address as "folks." Would he call his colleagues in the office "folks"? One sometimes sees this form of address used in strip cartoons when, confronted with swarms of sinister Venusians. Superman exhorts his companions on a space rocket: for all one knows this may become the customary usage of the space age. When the new "Sun" is radioed through to Apollo 12, Mr. Nicklin's form of address may seem appropriate, but otherwise the word has a slightly sinister ring; like that other dangerous word "chaps." People are people, but folks are suckers, just as, in the United States, citizens have learnt to be wary when they are addressed as "My fellow Americans."*

DEAR FOLKS [*Frank Nicklin writes*] *I read with amusement your excellent third leader of Tuesday. I am ordering six extra copies to send to the old sirs at home.*

THE TIMES

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guilty of this oversight—for the record, the anthology just mentioned also contains a very favourable discussion of Kibbutzim by the "New Left" activist Rick Margolies); and an essay on possibilities for Jewish-Arab cooperation that will appear in *Reflections on the Middle East* (H. Mason, ed., Mouton; parts appear in *Liberation*, Nov., 1969, and in the Israeli journal *New Outlook*, Nov.-Dec., 1969). In the latter, I do mention that *Al Fatah* contains left-wing elements (in a discussion of *Al Fatah* which relies on such New Left rags as *Le Monde diplomatique*, ENCOUNTER, and the Adelphi papers of the Institute for Strategic Studies). Yet I am sure that even one with Lipset's casual attitude toward fact cannot be unaware that this assertion is correct.

Lipset "doubts whether even the most sophisticated presentation of Israel's case could ever regain their support" (mine and Stone's). His references to me (and, to my knowledge, Stone) raise doubts about his qualifications for discussing the subject at all.

I know of no reason why Lipset should want to invent malicious lies, so I am willing to suppose that these references are merely irresponsible and ignorant. It is difficult, however, to maintain this assumption in the case of the columnist *R*. In a letter in the December issue of ENCOUNTER, I pointed out that he had made a series of entirely false statements about my views, in the August issue. *R* has neither the courtesy nor the honesty to acknowledge and correct these fabrications. Instead, he adds a new series of falsehoods. He justifies his earlier fabrications by pleading that it is difficult to summarise my views briefly (noting that even Hitler sometimes sounded reasonable). Therefore, he feels free to attribute to me (of course without reference, there being no source) views which I have never held and never expressed, which I have explicitly rejected, as is indicated by the quotes in my letter. Offering absolutely no factual support or textual evidence, *R* claims that I have "repeatedly and virulently condemned American foreign policy, in dogmatic and absolute terms that admit of no discussion." Thus he feels that he is quite justified in creating arbitrary inventions, and entirely ignoring what he refers to as my "copious" writings.

TURNING NOW to new falsehoods, *R* claims that in a *New Left Review* interview (Sept.-Oct., 1969), I stated that American foreign policy is "the inevitable reflection of a 'senseless, irrational and predatory economy,' of a 'criminal society'." His claim is false. There is no such statement in the text, nor is there any argument or statement that could be so interpreted. Referring to Viet Nam, I urge, in this interview, that opposition to the war not be subordinated to a general concern for social change, and that it can be effective. *R*'s statement is not only false, but even absurd. If I thought that American foreign policy was an "inevitable reflection" of economic factors or anything else, I would obviously not be spending an enormous amount of time and energy in an effort to bring about changes in it, through lectures, essays, protest and resistance. I do this precisely because I believe what I have repeatedly written: that we can make use of the freedom we enjoy to bring to an end such criminal actions as the American war in Viet Nam.

According to *R*, I believe that it is "futile" to argue or discuss the issues of the Viet Nam war—a conclusion that will surprise anyone who actually looks at my essays on the subject. What I wrote was very different. In introducing my essays, I stated that I have "a certain feeling of falseness" in discussing the Viet Nam war. It "does not have to do with the intellectual issues. The basic facts are clear enough; the assessment of the situation is as accurate as I can make it. But the entire performance is emotionally and morally false in a disturbing way," which I go on to explain. Then comes a quote that *R* excerpts, which continues as follows: "There may have been a time when American policy in Viet Nam was a debatable matter. This time is long past. It is no more debatable than the Italian war in Abyssinia or the Russian suppression of Hungarian freedom." Nevertheless, I undertake, in detail, to construct a case against the war, exactly as must be done in the other instances noted. Often it is necessary to argue at length in support of positions that one feels to be quite beyond dispute.

Next, *R* turns to the matter of Truman's Baylor speech and my quotations from D. F. Fleming's and James Warburg's accounts of this speech. The facts are exactly as I stated them in my letter in the December issue. *R* pretends that he cannot find in Truman's speech "the version" I offer in this letter. This is a pitiful evasion. As my letter clearly states, "the version" is Fleming's, and it appears precisely on the page indicated in my *American Power and the New Mandarins*, chapter 3, note 82.

R then denies that Fleming and Warburg were, as I state, "accurate and perceptive" in their rendition of the content of the speech. This is at least a substantive issue. His belief that "by no stretch of the imagination could Truman be held to be saying" what Fleming and Warburg assert is, however, incorrect, as *R* will quickly discover if he looks at Truman's text. I will gladly elaborate if he likes, but only if certain ground rules are accepted that are apparently uncongenial to *R*: that the facts be respected. (For those who may be interested, I explain the matter, which is quite simple and straightforward, in a forthcoming letter in *Commentary*, answering an effort by Arthur Schlesinger in *Commentary*, December, to maintain his misinterpretation of the facts.)

Next, *R* tries to justify his statement that I leave "the sphere of rational discourse" in discussing the Korean war. As noted in my letter, I have never written about Korea, except in uncontroversial passing references. *R* now cites one of these: my observation that "three times in a generation American technology has laid waste a helpless Asian country," the first two being Japan *in 1945* (as clearly stated), and Korea. This is, as I said, uncontroversial. If *R* is unfamiliar with the facts—unaware, say, that the bombing of Korea exceeded in tonnage the total bombing in the Pacific theatre in World War II—I will gladly supply him with references. But I suspect he is aware of the facts, since he once again attempts an evasion. Instead of

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dealing with my uncontroversial factual statement, he says: "It would be harder to argue that Korea was helpless or that America was exclusively responsible for the Korean war; but hardest of all, I think, to argue that Japan was a helpless victim of aggression or that the war against Japan was a purely American concern." It is easy—trivial, in fact—to show that North Korea was defenceless against the aerial bombardment that laid waste the country. The other points are, to be sure, absurd, but obviously these assertions of *R*'s do not follow from my uncontroversial statement that Japan in 1945 and Korea were helpless victims of a devastating attack by a superior technology.

R asserts that the propositions he invents do not have "the slightest relation to reality," which is surely correct. Nor do they have "the slightest relation" to anything I wrote. They do not support his claim that I leave "the sphere of rational discourse," for the simple reason that I have never said anything remotely resembling these propositions. In this case too, *R* is simply unwilling to keep to the truth.

To SUMMARISE BRIEFLY, *R*'s two columns are complete fabrication, except in one instance, as explained in my letter of December. The careless error there noted has long since been corrected in the second printing (and British edition) of my book. Apart from that, there are no errors, to my knowledge. There has been a fair amount of fabrication and pretence by outraged reviewers; in particular, I discuss some remarkable distortions by Arthur Schlesinger, in *Commentary*, October, p. 22, note 2. There are, quite obviously, grounds for disagreement on controversial issues.

It is unfortunate that ENCOUNTER should continue to publish, without checking references, such false and irresponsible allegations as those of Lipset and *R*. The problems they are skirting are of real importance, and are difficult enough without this debasement of political discourse.

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[There is a brief comment by *R* on p. 33 of this number.—*Ed Note*]

"Nothing but——"

PROFESSOR VIKTOR FRANKL's argument [ENCOUNTER, November] against reductionism on the ground that it must have unfortunate effects on the younger generation is about as simple-minded as the argument against evolution that it was horrible and therefore false. Unfortunately, horribleness is no criterion of falsehood.

His argument runs: if love can be derived from sex then, as sex is degraded, love is degraded. But this doesn't follow: the theorems of Euclid are derived from his axioms and the axioms are simple, but the theorems aren't. Or: to report an event first-hand entails having witnessed it, it might have been exciting to witness but not necessarily exciting to report. Love is no less lovely because closely related to animal urges; nor does anything loose its grandeur by being explained.

Professor Frankl lays great stress on possessing knowledge of what he calls "the meaning of life" which, he claims, the reductionists can't possess, but which is essential for our mental health. Is it not unfortunate that he fails to impart the piece of information which gives his life a meaning so that people like Carnap and Feigl (and my humble self) can be brought to repentance before our "noogenic neuroses" catch up with us? Or could it be that he doesn't impart this information because "the meaning of life" is a myth?

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Nietzsche's "Syphilis"

NEFASTUS DIES [ENCOUNTER, April 1969] hoped that loyal physicians would come thundering down in support of Nietzsche's *G.P.I.* ("General Paralysis of the Insane"). They haven't yet, perhaps because there is at least a scintilla of doubt about the diagnosis.

Firstly, Nietzche's father died at the age of 36 of "softening of the brain." This was attributed to a head injury but from the evidence it is unlikely. At 36 the causes of a slowly progressive and fatal cerebral disease are few. Some would imply a constitutional or genetic background, and it is therefore of interest that Nietzsche's brother also died of some cerebral disease at the age of two. A suggestion that Nietzsche *père* had neurosyphilis himself, and that Nietzsche therefore had congenital and not acquired *G.P.I.* is improbable in view of his intellectual brilliance until his breakdown and the age at which this occurred. But perhaps he inherited from his father the genes that predisposed to cerebral or cerebro-vascular disease.

Secondly, the evidence for a syphilitic infection in Nietzsche is hearsay. His statement "syphilitic infection in 1866" is in the Jena clinic records for 1890, but so is "my wife Cosima Wagner brought me here." The latter, known to be untrue, is regarded as insane rambling, the former as accurate history. There are a number of second-hand quotations that he was treated for syphilis by a physician (some say two) in Leipzig in 1867. No direct written evidence of this is yet available. If he was, the diagnosis would have been made on the recognition of a primary syphilitic sore, or, more probably in view of the timing, on the manifestations of a secondary syphilis—largely skin lesions. Such a method of diagnosis can never be beyond a doubt. Moreover, any history of possible exposure to infection would bias the doctor in favour of treating any doubtful lesion. Nowadays recognition of the causative organism or the result of a specific blood test can give a certain diagnosis; but the former was not discovered until 1905, and the latter only developed in 1906. Another suggestion that symptoms he described in 1865 were those of secondary

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syphilis only adds confusion. The symptoms were by no means specific; and if he had secondary syphilis in 1865 he could hardly have had a primary infection in 1866 (or 1867, as some suggest).

Thirdly, *G.P.I.* is a slowly progressive disease. It may manifest itself abruptly to the world at large by some sudden catastrophic change in behaviour, but it rarely fails to show more subtle changes in intelligence and personality for months or even years before. If his breakdown in Turin in 1889 was due to *G.P.I.* we should look for evidence of some dementing process—a progressive intellectual impairment—in his preceding works. A detailed and impartial reading of work done at the relevant time is required. Unfortunately, a number of German psychiatrists who have attempted this have worked on the assumption that the diagnosis was *G.P.I.* so that unbiased assessment becomes a *parti pris* search for supporting evidence.

His letters in the weeks preceding his breakdown show evidence of elation and exalted ideas of his own worth and abilities. Whether they constitute pathological delusions of grandeur must depend in part on the value placed on his ideas and writings. However, when he announces plans, and sends out letters calling together the crowned heads of Europe, to form an anti-German league, mental derangement must be accepted. This was only a week or two before the contretemps with the ill-treated horse, the point from which his insanity is usually dated. In the preceding six months he seems to have assembled and written all or large parts of *The Twilight of the Idols, The Anti-Christ* and *Ecce Homo*. They show no deterioration in mastery of language or style. Some consider the arguments in the first two more clear and coherent than in earlier more aphoristic works. Overbeck, a traditional professor of theology of the day, said of *The Anti-Christ*: "All previous attempts to make of Christ a human figure seem absurdly abstract and no more than illustrations to rationalist dogma, compared with Nietzsche's achievement. . . ." It is difficult to accept these works as the outpourings of a brain already riddled with syphilis.

What alternatives are there? There is clear evidence that he finally had some form of organic brain disease. He lived, or existed, for a further eleven years. During the last three of them he had two strokes, one of which deprived him of speech. Degenerative arterial disease is a possibility; more remotely, a cerebral tumour; and a contribution to the catastrophe could have come from his self-administered chloral and possibly opium, or the use of a mysterious Javanese drug. (The suggestion that the latter was a form of cannabis may offer him a place in current hagiology!)

We are left with a question mark. *G.P.I.* is a possible—some would say the probable—diagnosis. This kind of medical detective story is entertaining but always inconclusive. Even if the answer is found it cannot be used to assess the value of his ideas; and Professor MacIntyre's proposition "Nietzsche's madness is the outcome of thinking Nietzsche's thoughts," though a possible contribution to diagnosis, is here equally irrelevant. His thoughts must be judged of themselves. Certainly to invoke *G.P.I.* with its penumbra of dissolute wickedness is the argument *ad personam*—always an admission of defeat in the refutation of ideas.

C. W. M. WHITTY

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Tyerman Replies to Mishan

DR. E. J. MISHAN (in the January ENCOUNTER) should not fall into the errors which he attributes to those who do not altogether agree with him. For instance, I did not of course say that "a lack of the right sort of teachers, or a lack of teacher/taught dialogue" was the cause of university students' unrest. I said that this was one of the causes. There are two sides to the confrontation, however you may weigh them; and violence, as I suggested, is practically always the students' own fault.

Nor must Dr. Mishan fall into the habit, favoured (according to Louis J. Halle in the same ENCOUNTER) by Karl Marx, of bolstering his case by decrying or blackening the motives of those who do not go along with him. What cause has he to contrast his own "uncompromising treatment of a live political issue" with "those who court a reputation for sound judgment and realism . . . by a conspicuous display of moderation in moving with the times and by a care to suggest nothing that the public is not just about ready to accept"? This is not rational discussion, but yah-boo invective. What right has he to preen himself as an "economic specialist" making "a radical reassessment of current social policies," while dismissing those who may oppose him as "busybodies made eminent by . . . the present system"? Innuendo and aspersion are no substitutes for argument (or indeed for good manners), whether employed by Marx or by Mishan.

Certainly, nobody reading Dr. Mishan's pretentious retort to those who took the trouble to comment on what he wrote about the right way to finance universities would gather that I, for instance, in the little note which you asked me to write about some aspects of his thesis, in fact entirely agreed with his main plea for a full and proper costing of student places, and a recalculation of the opportunity cost of the present arrangements. True, I said that student unrest could not be expelled by economics, any more than nature by a pitchfork. True, I left aside the choice between student grants and loans, believing this to be, like free education at all its stages, a political rather than an economic choice. True, I suggested that Professor Harry Johnson's brief analysis of the economic causes of the L.S.E.'s troubles went nearer to the real heart of the matter. But I, at any rate, said nothing to lend colour to Dr. Mishan's caricature of himself as a scholar and a radical beset by self-seeking obscurantists.

May I add finally that I found Dr. Mishan's other plea ("The Spillover Enemy," in the December ENCOUNTER) for the proper costing and compensation of the bad effects of growth and development even more stimulating and relevant than his broadside on the universities.

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Must We Love the Germans?

THERE REALLY is only one thing worse than the Public Bar vilification of "the Germans" and that is the intellectual's tortured wrestling with "the daemonic element in the German soul" (as if the "German soul" were more daemonic than anyone else's).

I am a great admirer of Mr. John Mander, and it would be both futile and presumptuous to try to refute his opinions. One can, however, refute his facts. Heine's warning to the French about the distant rumblings of the great German philosophical revolution did not appear in *The Romantic School* but in *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (Book 3) and was not intended to be taken too seriously. This did not prevent the French press during the Franco-Prussian War from interpreting Heine's little joke as evidence of a monstrous militaristic threat. Generations of Germanophobe British historians (on both Left and Right) have, with the benefit of hindsight, taken pains to interpret most aspects of German life and letters from Barbarossa to Bethmann-Hollweg as evidence of a great historical German Threat. But here Mr. Mander would probably agree with me. When passing judgments on that mysterious collective whipping-boy, "the Germans" (which Germans?), the British pontiffs and pundits say with Goethe's Mephistopheles "Omniscient we are not, yet much is known to us. . . ."

Prejudices about the Germans are no less prejudices for being wrapped up in portentous pseudo-historical mythological studies of "the German soul." Why on earth, Mr. Mander, is it "surely not chance that the very word *Geltung* brings to the ear an echo of *Vergeltung*"? Is it then surely not chance that the English word "infatuation" brings to the ear an echo of the word "fatuity"? Too often British studies of the German soul show a strange infatuation for quite untenable hypotheses and bogus sophistry. It seems to me that the best and only way to understand "the Germans" and improve Anglo-German relations (which so many have a vested interest in poisoning) is not to perpetuate hoary, though would-be profound clichés about them, but to live in Germany, speak the language and see the Germans as they are today (all sixty million of them), not as they were in the writings of Arnold, Coleridge, and the propaganda of 1914–1918.

Of course Mr. Mander is right that Anglo-German relationships are endangered, and that indifference towards the Germans is as bad as hostility. It does not so much matter what the man in the Public Bar thinks about "the Huns" if the intellectual has a responsible attitude towards them. That this is clearly not the case is a very sad fact. What Coleridge said about the Germans of his day could surely be said about our attitude to them now—there is a nimiety, a too-muchness in it. It is our national fault.

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AUTHORS

Jan Kott's "Witkiewicz & the Corpses" was translated by Bohdana Carpenter. . . .

Ali Mazrui is one of Africa's leading young political scientists. He was born in Mombasa, Kenya, and was educated in both the U.S. (Columbia University, M.A.) and Britain (D.Phil. Oxon.). He is at present the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Makerere University College in Uganda. Among his books are *Towards a Pax Africana* (Weidenfeld, 1967) and *On Heroes and Uhuru-Worship* (Longmans, 1967). . . .

A NOTE on Professor **Robert Nisbet** appears on p. 10, accompanying his article. In a curious paragraph in his year-end review entitled, "Looking Back from 1980," in *The Observer*, Rudolph Klein predicted the end of the "intellectual fashionableness" of figures like Marshall McLuhan and Herbert Marcuse, and ventured to make this prediction: "The 1970s saw a vogue for Robert Nisbet, an American sociologist. . . ."

J. L. Talmon is the author of two well-known studies in the history of ideas—*The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (1952) and *Political Messianism* (1960). He is a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and his most recent contribution to ENCOUNTER was "Exchange of Letters with Toynbee" (October 1967). His present article will be included in the volume of essays entitled *The Unique and the Universal*, shortly to be published by Secker & Warburg. . . .

George Seferis received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1963. The poem in this number of ENCOUNTER is the second he has written since the volume *The Secret Poems* was published in 1966. The first ("The Cats of St. Nicholas") appeared in the July 1969 ENCOUNTER. The author, who was formerly Greece's Ambassador in London (1957–1962) is at present living in retirement in Athens.

Edmund Keeley, together with Philip Sherrard, has translated Seferis' *Collected Poems: 1924–1955* which Jonathan Cape recently published. . . .

David Martin teaches sociology at the London School of Economics. Among his books are *Pacifism: An historical and sociological study* (Routledge, 1965) and *The Religious and the Secular* (1969). He was the editor of *Anarchy & Culture* also published last year by Routledge. . . .

Ronald Hayman's latest book, *Techniques of Acting*, was published last year by Methuen. He is now working on a novel, a biography of John Gielgud, and a book on 20th-century American verse. . . .

R. K. Narayan's new collection of stories, *A Horse and Two Goats*, will be published later this year by Viking Press, N.Y., and Bodley Head, London. Narayan was born in Madras (in 1906) and now lives in Mysore. Among his books are *The Sweet-Vendor* (Heinemann, 1965) and *Gods, Demons and Others* (Bodley Head, 1967). . . .

THE ILLUSTRATION which accompanies M. J. Lasky's article, "The Birth of a Metaphor" (p. 34), was specially drawn for ENCOUNTER by **Jaro Slav,** a young European artist currently living in London. . . .

Cover design by **Colin Banks** and **John Miles.**

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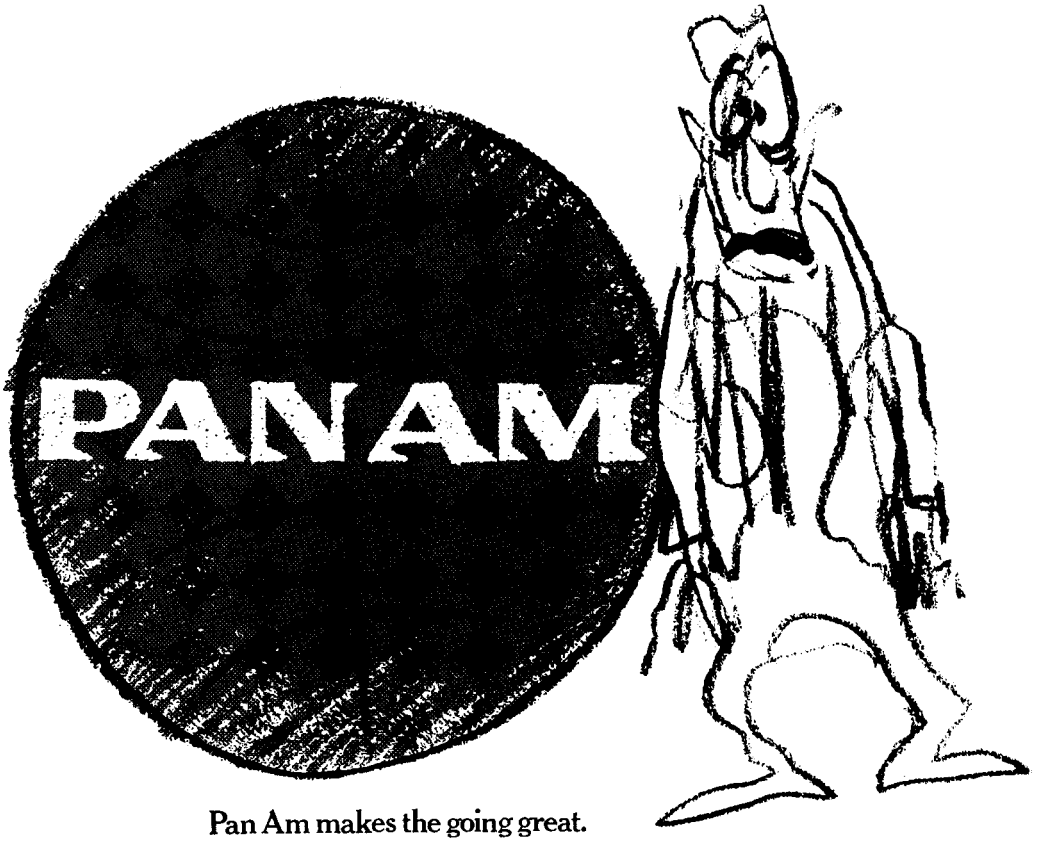

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